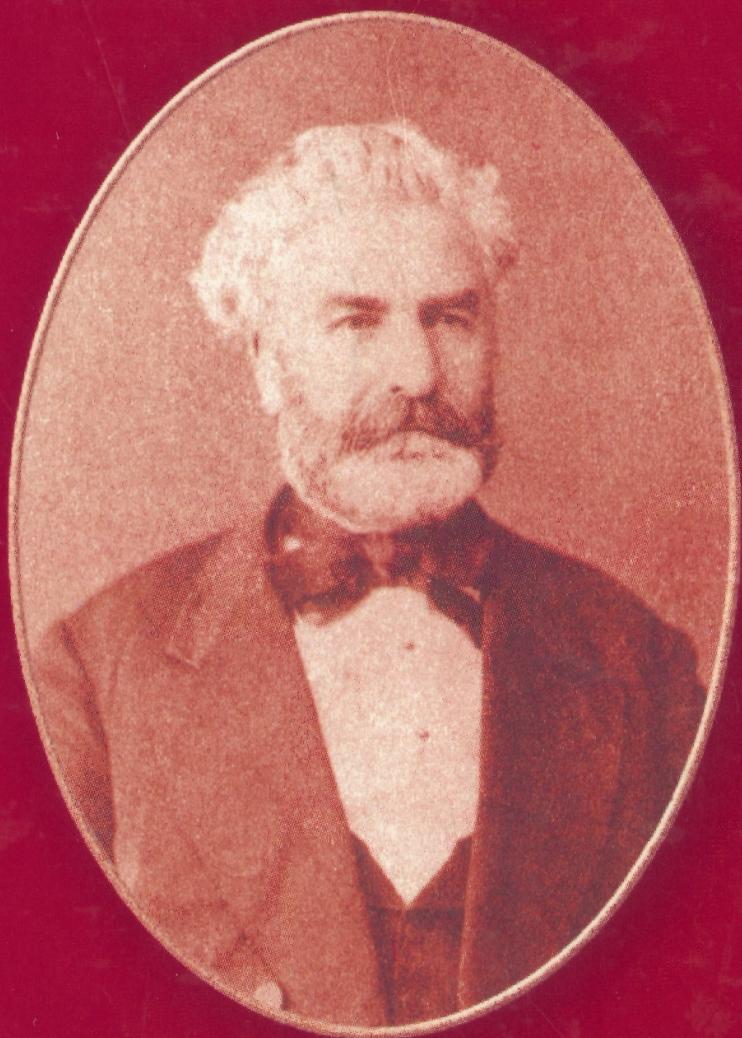


ИЛИЯ ТОДЕВ

Д-р Стоян Чомаков

/1819 - 1893/



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АКАДЕМИЧНО ИЗДАТЕЛСТВО
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ИЛИА ТОДЕВ

**DR. STOYAN TCHOMAKOFF
(1819-1893)
LIFE, WORK, DESCENDANTS**

PART ONE: RESEARCH

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SUMMARY

The author's approach to the theme chosen as a subject of this monograph is traditional. He makes a thorough historiographical analysis and Dr. Tchomakoff's self appraisal is considered as a starting point.

In his autobiographical notes, written in the last years of his life, Dr Tchomakoff mentioned that after he became a widower in the early 1862, he had become even more intimate with that ideal bride who had to give birth to a whole nation.

This ideal bride was the Struggle for an Independent Bulgarian Church to which Dr. Tchomakoff dedicated the best years of his life and which in 1870 brought Bulgarians the status of millet. Thus, Tchomakoff claimed to be the Father of the Bulgarian nation.

How does the historiography assess this claim?

There are two basic points of view clearly distinguishable in it. The first one is almost ready to accept his self-estimation. The other does not recognize the role he insisted on and denounces him as a *national traitor*.

The followers of the first opinion are defined as Nationalists and the adherents of the second – as Russophiles. A serious terminological stipulation has to be made in respect to this division.

Most of the derivatives of the term *nation* – nationalist, nationalistic, nationalists, nationalism, – independently of the neutral sense of the basic word – quite often and rather incorrectly have been charged with certain negative meaning. In this monograph they are used just to describe the concept that each nation has the right to a free existence. When, instead of a liberating nationalism, we are dealing with an aggressive and xenophobic nationalism, in which a nation should dominate other nations, assimilate or destroy them, then derivatives of the vaudevillian character Chauvin, such as chauvinistic, chauvinist, chauvinism are applied.

In fact, *Nationalists* and *Russophiles* are also the names of the major parties involved in the Church Question.

Seven names are selected for constructing a notion about the general panorama. Three of them, not without any doubts, (Simeon Radev, Simeon,

Bishop of Varna and Preslav, and Nikolay Genchev) could be qualified as Nationalists, three others (Todor Burmov, Dr. Khristo Stambolski and Cyril, Bishop of Plovdiv and Patriarch of Bulgaria) – as Russophiles. The historiographic review ends with Toncho Zhechev's version about Tchomakoff. Although a Russophile, the last author adopts certain positions that are typical for the nationalist view on the subject.

According to the Russophilic comprehension Tchomakoff was a Turkophile above all. In the terms of this concept that label means an opponent of the Bulgarian liberation from the Ottoman yoke, a person who is against the restoration of the Bulgarian Statehood. The representatives of this approach perceived him only through the prism of his position during the Eastern Crisis of 1875-1878. They preferred to stigmatize him rather than study his behavior and ideas.

According to the Nationalists Tchomakoff's Turkophilia was predominantly a form of territorial maximalism, i.e. a strategy for uniting all Bulgarian lands first into national Church, later on - into national State. They esteemed or respected him mainly for his major, in their view, role in solving the Church Question and for his long-term goals, which occurred to be hypothetical to some extent. They glorify him because of these reasons.

The historiographic review comes to the conclusion that Tchomakoff is simultaneously an outstanding and controversial persona in the Bulgarian history and a poorly studied figure. The reason for the latter is obvious: Russophilia has always prevailed considerably in the Bulgarian National Revival Studies; and so, in spite of his significant role and the numerous sources, Tchomakoff the Russophobe simply became a victim of something like a historiographical conspiracy of silence. On these grounds, the main task of the Author is to compose as complete and correct as possible Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff's biography.

Achieving this goal needs rewriting the history of the allegedly well-studied Struggle for an Independent National Church in the 1860s and 1870s. Thus, there is a chance to supply it with a great deal of new and important pages. Although the approach is definitely factual, the contribution in this respect has inevitably led to new conceptualization of the main problems. They are designated in the conclusion.

The *INTRODUCTION* ends in a representation of the sources.

#

Chapter One is entitled *ORIGIN AND EDUCATION (FROM KOPRIVSHTITSA TO PARIS, 1819-1848/49)*.

There is a shortage of information about Tchomakoff's childhood and parents. For this reason, his origin, and his primary education are presented

through the specific features of his family and the cultural context of his birth-place.

Koprivshtitsa was a small and remote town in the Sredna Gora Mountains. Its inhabitants, however, were notably clever and exceptionally patriotic. Many of the leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival were born there. One has to include in their list the two major figures of the National Liberation Movement after the Crimean War – Lyuben Karavelov, Chairman of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee, and Stoyan Tchomakoff, the secular leader of the Struggle for an Independent National Church.

From where had such an unusual concentration of strong Bulgarian blood flowed into Koprivshtitsa?

Todor Panchev gave us a possible explanation of this phenomenon. According to his explanation the population of this town was the salt of Bulgarians which in the 15th century settled down in Koprivshtitsa in order to survive and in the 19th century they dispersed again among other Bulgarians and instilled them with the old strength and ambitions.

Then, special attention was paid to the Chalâkovs, the family of Dr. Tchomakoff's mother, Gruda. Numerous, rich, active in the community and patriots, they were respected as a kind of Bulgarian aristocracy. Their greatest deed was the Bulgarization of Plovdiv. In the 1860s-1870s this town became the second, after Constantinople, important center of the activity of the Bulgarian National Movement political wing.

Tchomakoff received his primary education in his native town, in the traditional school of daskal (schoolmaster) hadji (pilgrim) Gero Mushek. This was the prototype of hadji Gencho from the unforgettable novel of Lyuben Karavelov *Bulgars of Olden Times*. Later Tchomakoff continued his studies at the Greek school of Plovdiv under the supervision of Georgios Tsoucalas. This man was a celebrity, too - although not so much owing to his doubtless erudition but due to his maniacal chauvinism.

Tchomakoff's next teacher, Theophilos Kairis, was a Greek thinker of Balkan-wide and possibly even of Europe-wide significance. In his famous school on the Aegean island of Andros he also promoted chauvinistic ideas which, however, proved to be counterproductive with his Bulgarian students whose instinct for national self-preservation was thus provoked and in response they established a *Slavonic-Bulgarian Studious Society*. Tchomakoff was one of its most active members.

Foreign attempts of assimilation turned Tchomakoff into a fanatic supporter of his natural ethnic identity. The years spent on Andros converted him to an ardent Bulgarian and Slavonic supporter. Furthermore, realizing that he was a representative of a numerous people and that the Greeks were brain-washing him, he became their sworn enemy. Among the

leaders of the Bulgarian National Revival only the Graecophobia of Paisiy of Khilendar and of Neophytos Bozveli (and perhaps of Dragan Tsankov, as well) was equal to his.

Tchomakoff learned from Kairis not only how to be a national and tribal patriot but also how to become a religious reformer. The roots of his later principal disagreement with the revolutionary methods in the national struggle and of his strong liberal-democratic orientation to some extent should be traced back to his stay at Andros.

Perhaps, there, on this Cycladic island Tchomakoff made his professional choice – medicine. He studied medicine first in Pisa, then in Florence, and last in Paris.

In the French capital he is in friendly terms with Prince Czartoryski, leader of the aristocratic wing of the Polish emigration. Later on Tchomakoff was influenced by its political views and he would cooperate with some Polish émigrés in Turkey.

#

Chapter Two, *FIRST STEPS TO PUBLIC ACTIVITY (PLOVDIV, 1848/49 – 1861)*, presents Tchomakoff's medical practice and the beginning of his public and political career.

In 1848/1849 Tchomakoff returned to Plovdiv with his diploma of Doctor in Medicine and Surgery. He was one of the first 5 or 6 graduated Bulgarian doctors and the second who had a specialization in the field of surgery.

Although there were two (military and civil) medical schools after European model, in the 1830s the healthcare services in Turkey were at a medieval stage. In the large empire of the Ottomans the medical practice was a profession that each subject of the Padishah could practice without any restrictions. Anyone who believed himself capable to cure, to bandage wounds, to set straight fractures, etc., could be labeled doctor and fulfill medical services against payment, of course without responsibility or control. People rather uncritically accepted impostors as medical persons and even highly venerated their art which was veiled in intentional, often disguising quackery or excessive mercenary motives, mystery.

Under such conditions during 1849-1863 Tchomakoff fulfilled his duties as *Town Doctor* of Plovdiv, which was a public office. He established also a large private practice and became well-known due to perforated oesophagus operations which were rather courageous and difficult for the time being. This novelty for Turkey was discussed at the Medical Council (the Healthcare Ministry) of the Empire.

Tchomakoff continued to practice medicine also after 1861 when he left for Constantinople. But this time only as an exception, for friends and relatives, for partners or to balance his personal budget. In the 1870s he was even a doctor

in the pay of the Exarchate. In the imperial capital Tchomakoff was engaged in healthcare public education.

In Plovdiv Tchomakoff opened (1849) his own pharmacy. He dealt also with iltizam (tax-farming) and commerce.

Coming home from abroad, Tchomakoff started active public and political life. He was a trustee of two Bulgarian schools and in one of them he taught French. Of the pupils, he was also a doctor, when necessary. However, his most important public role was the participation in the patriotic anti-Greek struggle, which was of primary importance.

There were two main reasons for this: firstly, the most of Plovdiv population was Bulgarian by origin, but willing to hellenize; secondly, the spirit of the time was powerfully dominated by the national idea, to the Bulgarian interpretation of which this monograph pays special attention.

It is in the early Middle Ages that Bulgarians for the first time stumbled upon the national idea. However, Paisiy of Khilendar (18th century) gave its revivalist shape. This monk was the first among his compatriots to realize that the near future would be dominated by nationalism and not by (pseudo) universalism which in those times was widespread under two main forms: traditional or religious (based on the Orthodoxy) and modern or secular (inspired by the Enlightenment).

The theocratic Ottoman Empire was organized by the confession indication into millet-system. No institution of any significance or a broader organization, on which the Bulgarian national idea could rely, existed in this Empire. So, accepting self-realization as its fundamental aim, it necessarily had to start off on the road of the slightest resistance and so to concentrate primarily into one basic goal: its own culture.

The question for culture nationalization had two main aspects. The first one was related to the introduction of the Bulgarian language, the second – to the Bulgarization of the institutions that served the spiritual sphere. In the latter the Church occupied first position, as far as the whole intellectual life of a society emerging from the Middle Age was subordinated to the religion, to the religious needs. This was even truer about Bulgarians who were part of the Turkish State, that was organised in compliance to religious prescriptions. And according to these prescriptions the whole society was structured in separate and relatively autonomous religious communities (millets).

Such autonomy was not only of religious and cultural dimensions. It had also legal, administrative and fiscal aspects. So, in order to realize the Bulgarian National Idea, it was necessary to take the ecclesiastical shape leading to the Struggle for an Independent Church, which gave it the right to claim the status of a separate millet.

In the third fourth of the 19th century Dr. Tchomakoff was the main champion of the Bulgarian national idea.

The Bulgarisation of Plovdiv, that had been carried out by the Chalâkovs, but not completed up till then, with Dr. Tchomakoff's determinant intervention turned out into a full-scaled conflict with Greeks, and was finally won thanks to his leading position. The local ecclesiastical controversy came a little bit later but developed quickly and in a categorical manner bringing this town into the leading position in the Bulgarian Kulturkampf.

The growing nationwide Church Movement naturally needed a united leadership. However, Bulgarians who lived in Constantinople were afraid that the Sublime Porte could accuse them of instigation. They did not dare to take key position in this struggle and to guide their countrymen. Therefore, after the Crimean War Dr. Tchomakoff set to take great endeavors, first, to make Plovdiv a leading center of the movement for separation from Greeks. Then, as far as it occurred the things should be concentrated in the capital, he began to work actively for the establishment of a long-term representative agency of all Bulgarians in Constantinople.

This was not a new idea. The new and important in the case was that exactly Tchomakoff had the determination and the material opportunity to realize it. Thus, he became the first professional politician of modern Bulgaria.

At that time the other Bulgarian leaders were making their living either by journalism and trade, by teaching and joining the clergy or by becoming foreign (usually Turkish and Russian) officers. Tchomakoff was the only one who fully devoted him to a responsible and effective political activity. And such a respectful Bulgarian institution as Plovdiv Diocese Trusteeship paid his salary.

The second part of this chapter deals with the opportunities and the views with which Tchomakoff came to the Ottoman capital in the spring of 1861 as a representative of the dioceses of Plovdiv and Sofia for taking part in a nationwide Bulgarian Assembly on the Church Question. It treats also his activities during the first several months of his Constantinopolitan period.

Tchomakoff left for the city on the Bosphorus carrying with him a petition, long 20 meters, which was at the same time a sort of a power of attorney before the Sublime Porte. A wealth approximately of 400 000 piasters was at his disposal. It was quite a substantial amount of money for the time being. However, his determination, his attitudes, and contacts were far more important.

Despite his education received in catholic countries (Italy and France), Tchomakoff was categorically and consistently against union with Rome. He thought it would destroy the unity of the Bulgarian nation. And this unity was very important because the nation was in a process of construction at that time.

Likewise he was against the adoption of Protestantism. Not willing Bulgarians to have anything nominally in common with it, Tchomakoff at the same time was actively working for ecclesiastical reforms after the Protestant model.

England stayed behind Protestantism and had quite many interests not only to spread it but also to support the establishment of a Bulgarian National Church. Therefore, Tchomakoff would actively cooperate with the English representatives in Turkey. He would receive their diplomatic support and they would help him make Bulgarian propaganda abroad. The persons who were in active communication with him were Queen Victoria's ambassadors in Constantinople H. Bulwer, Lord Lyons and H. Elliot, consul J. E. Blunt, Lord Strangford, a linguist and Bulgarophile, the voyagers and writers Georgina Mackenzie and Adelina Urby. Without doubt, during the National Revival Tchomakoff was the greatest Bulgarian Anglophile.

Tchomakoff arrived at Constantinople in a moment, decisive for the Church Movement. That was the beginning of April 1861. The leaders of the so-called Easter Action, by which a separation from the Greek Church was solemnly declared, were exiled. Bulgarians as a people faced the necessity either to join the Uniate with the Pope that had been already proclaimed (December 1860) or to become again subjects of the Patriarch.

Thinking the Uniate was an unfavorable choice, Tchomakoff actively participated in its first defeat in May-June 1861. At the same time the Church National Assembly, where he distinguished himself more and more as a leading figure, renewed the demand for an Independent Church. Since the Sublime Porte, represented by the Grand Vizier Kibrıslı Pasha, once again rejected it, the Bulgarian representatives were forced to modify their claims and to seek for a foreign support.

They authorized Tchomakoff to redefine the Church Question. Being influenced by the suggestions of Ali Pasha and M. Czaykowski and probably looking for English support, Tchomakoff worked out a new project for its deciding. It was in compliance with the spirit of the Tanzimat, which aimed to liquidate the millet-system. According to this new project Bulgarians should remain part of the Great Church but would obtain extended national rights and would be liberated from its secular power which should pass into the hands of the state.

#

This was a crucial moment marking a new stage in the development of the Church Question. In the book it indicates the beginning of a new Chapter, which is third in order, but first in importance, being entitled *THE SECULAR LEADER OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL STRUGGLE (1861-1870)*.

Although Tchomakoff was already a distinguished figure at the top, the Assembly rejected his project and accepted another one behind which stayed Russia. It became known as the Eight Points and was worked out by T. Burmov. Instead of Tchomakoff's proposal to abolish the Rum-millet, it aimed at equal partition of the power in the Oecumenical Patriarchate between Bulgarians and Greeks. The first two of the Eight Points were the most important. In

their terms Bulgarians could participate in the election for Patriarch according to their number and would have equal with Greeks number of representatives in the Holy Synod. As far as Bulgarians were more numerous in comparison to Greeks this program, dualistic in essence, contained the opportunity – theoretically if not practically – to make them equal to Greeks and also to bring them the patriarchal throne in the joint Church.

In the late summer of 1861, the representatives, who were given only three months powers by their authorizers, went back home. A kind of *Standing Committee* remained in the capital. Tchomakoff had a key position in this institution, which was sanctioned by Turks. In 1864 a *Temporary Council of the Bulgarian National Community in Constantinople* was established. Its objectives were to represent the Bulgarian people before the Sublime Porte. As its honorary chairman was elected Hilarion of Macariopolis, the hero of 1861 Easter Action, who was still in exile. Tchomakoff was invested with the acting chairmanship. In fact, these two persons were the main leaders of the Church Movement.

Although occasionally he was making some attempts to appeal for a separate hierarchy or to abolish the Rum-millet, in the forthcoming years Tchomakoff would act in the framework of the Eight Points Project. This was a stage of intensive negotiations with Greeks who did not want to share their leading position in the Oecumenical Patriarchate. Since Bulgarians had no chance alone to impose their will, neither they could rely on any foreign support, those negotiations occurred to be completely fruitless. Reflecting the overlapping interests of both Russia and Turkey in the Church controversy of Bulgarians and Greeks, the Eight Points were simply a form to postpone its settlement.

The appearance (1863) of the *Savetnik Gazette* occurred to be an important moment in the time of the Eight Points. This newspaper announced to be an official paper of the semiofficial Bulgarian delegation in Constantinople that had to deal with the Church Question. Dr. Tchomakoff did the greatest service for its starting and publishing. That was the occasion for scrutinizing his general participation in the Bulgarian Revival press. The newspapers published a great deal of articles written by him, on the one hand, and on the other they regularly covered – sometimes in blame, sometimes in eulogy – his actions.

Initially Tchomakoff coordinated his activities on the Eight Points with the Russian Embassy in Constantinople. At that time his attitudes towards the Russian politics and diplomacy, in general, was in harmony with his strong Slavophilia (in the broad sense of the term). However, in the beginning of 1863 he understood Russia had no interest in and made a lot of barriers in front of the idea of establishing a separate Bulgarian Church. This converted him into the most famous Russophobe of the Bulgarian Revival.

All his hopes were set now on Turks. Because in the East religion is dominated by State, Turkey was the most significant factor after Russia on which the Church Question depended. The Sublime Porte, however, was not in a hurry. Its will was not to put an end to the ecclesiastical controversy but to exhaust the Patriarchate and to suppress the millet-system. Tchomakoff gained the favor of the leading Turkish statesmen of that time - Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha. He was ready to wait and to cooperate with them for a gradual taking away the secular power from the clergy and its transferring into the hands of the state administration where Bulgarians, however, should be broadly represented.

By such an attitude he provoked a strong counter-action by Russian diplomacy. In 1864 a new ambassador of the North Empire, General Ignatiev, came to Constantinople. He clashed very soon with Tchomakoff. Their conflict, which lasted till the Liberation, played the most important role in the settlement of the Church Question.

First, Ignatiev tried to balance Tchomakoff's influence by setting Hilarion of Macariopolis, just liberated from exile, against him. Although some sparkles of rivalry were bursting out from time to time between the secular and the religious leaders of the Church Struggle, they went hand in hand during the 1860s. Another bishop, Paissios of Plovdiv would become a permanent enemy of Tchomakoff. His potential, however, was rather limited.

Having failed to block his opponent, Ignatiev engaged in attempts to get him removed from Constantinople by trying to convince the citizens of Plovdiv to call him back. This tactics also did not work. The Ambassador's efforts to discredit Tchomakoff before the Bulgarian society using the media proved to be rather inefficient, too.

Despite his energetic efforts, the Russian ambassador managed to oust Tchomakoff from his leading position in the Question not earlier than 1869 when he himself from an adversary had become a supporter of the idea of a separate Church for all Bulgarians, and when Turks, because of rapprochement with Russia, gave the Plovdiv representative the cold shoulder.

Plenty of studies were dedicated to the Russian policy on the Church Question and still there was no clarification why such a radical change took place in the second half of 1860s.

According to the author's view presented in the monograph, this change was a response to the actions, undertaken by Tchomakoff at the end of 1866 to profit from the new Eastern Crisis, and which threatened to convert the eastern part of the Balkans into a second Poland.

A well-known fact is that due to the changed dislocation of the powers in Europe, a disturbance was on its way to set afire the Balkans at that very time. The most active were the Cretan Greeks. They tried to get rid of the Turkish domination and join the Greek Kingdom. On their behalf, Russia and France -

the Great powers most interested in the Eastern Question - put their own reform projects forward. The French one proposed strengthening of the Ottoman Empire through equalization in rights of all the Padishah's subjects and *fusing* them into a *unified Ottoman nation*. *Autonomy or anatomy* – in a rather specific manner Prince Gorchakov, the Russian foreign minister, summarized his program, which was correctly interpreted by his Turkish counterpart Fuad Pasha as intention to establish *Disunited States of Turkey*. The Russian project, however, provided that the turning of the unitary Ottoman Empire into a federation of autonomous territories would be carried out alongside geographic lines of demarcation and not in compliance with the national principle. The implementation of this project could seriously jeopardize the unity of the Bulgarian people.

Such was the international and domestic situation when Turks were finally forced to pay special attention to Dr. Tchomakoff's request for rapprochement against Greeks. They became more willing to restrict the secular power of the Patriarch and to grant Bulgarians offices in the high levels of the imperial administration.

Almost immediately this Turkish move provoked changes in the Russian politics which relied on the Bulgarian territory as a substantial segment of the road to Constantinople - its major goal in the Eastern Question. According to the Russian view by that time, Bulgarians, being, in terms of General Ignatiev, a *backward people* ought not to pretend to an independent hierarchy because the latter could put them in serious moral jeopardy. Politically, recommended the Russian diplomacy, they had to seek close relations with Serbs in order to find an ally in the struggle for their liberation from Turks.

Now, after the beginning of the Turkish-Bulgarian rapprochement, Russia was forced to recognize a national status for Bulgarians with right to a Church and State of their own. In the spring of 1867 under the pressure of Ignatiev, Patriarch Gregory VI announced a project for establishment of a separate Bulgarian Church under the name of *Exarchate*. The Russian program for reforming Turkey, which became known at the same time, provided that Bulgaria, like several other regions, would be given autonomy. However, both projects were very restrictive. The national hierarchy would be strongly dependent on the Patriarch and would cover only a part of the Bulgarian territory – from the Danube River to the Balkan Mountains. Such were the borders of the Bulgarian autonomous province. In addition, if the possible Bulgarian Exarchate would be strongly dependent on the will of the Patriarch, the possible Bulgarian autonomy should accept Serbian guardianship in a dualistic state under Obrenovich dynasty.

The Russophiles were ready heartily to accept this project. In Tchomakoff's view it was not only rather insufficient but it threatened Bulgarians with a

new, and not less dangerous, national oppression or even with a national assimilation. He was categorically insisting on Bulgarians' loyalty to the Sultan and not asking for more than a national hierarchy. Thus he managed to convince the leaders of the Church Movement not to adopt the Patriarchal Project for an Exarchate from the Danube River to the Balkan Mountains and also officially to insist on the recovery of the Ohrid Archbishopric and the inclusion in its diocese of all wishing to join it.

The clash between Russophobes and Russophiles found its brilliant reflection in the press. Slaveykov's *Macedonia Gazette* stood behind Tchomakoff. Both, the pro-Uniate official Genovich's *Turkey Gazette* and the pro-Russian T. Burmov's *Vremia (Time)* were against him. The Russian Embassy found the situation in Constantinople rather unfavorable for efficient press propaganda and stopped its regular subsidy for the *Vremia*. Its editor went to Wallachia where published two pamphlets written under Ignatiev's instruction. Both of them were directed against Tchomakoff and his political course. Not satisfied with the potentialities of the *Macedonia Gazette*, Tchomakoff in his turn stood up for his own views in the *Courrier d'Orient Gazette*, published in French. In the beginning of 1868 his pamphlet *La Question Bulgare* was published in French by the printing house of this newspaper.

T. Burmov proposed to patch up the conflict with Greeks and, even at the price of assimilation, to seek for rapprochement with Russians and Serbs against Turks. Then Tchomakoff held out the concept of Bulgarians' joining the planned *Ottoman nation* on condition that they would protect and develop their national identity and national unity through obtaining a separate Church.

Tchomakoff's strategy was winning. On the one hand, the plans for an all-Balkan alliance against Turks failed. The supporters of the *status quo* among the Great Powers prevailed. The Ottoman Empire survived once again. On the other hand, the Sublime Porte changed radically its policy towards the Bulgarian-Greek conflict. By that time Turks encouraged the dissension of their Christian subjects. Under the pretext of being a secular and concomitantly heterodox power they refused to interfere into clearly religious affairs. Now they began – having a good reason, of course, – to apprehend that under the Russian supervision the Church Question would be smoothed and Bulgarians in large numbers would give up to strong mutinous temptations. In consequence, the Sublime Porte occurred ready to intervene actively into the feud and finally to stop favoring Greeks.

Thus, Turks passed to translate the vain words into reality. In October 1868 they handed to Tchomakoff two projects for solution of the Church Question. This act was a result of the demonstrated until that moment loyalty on behalf of Dr. Tchomakoff and a sign that they would expect similar future behavior. There were slight differences between the projects and both of them pro-

vided for establishment of an extritorial Church of all Bulgarians. So, the Sublime Porte demonstrated undoubtedly its will to find a solution of the Question in favor to the Bulgarian desires and to take this decision without any considerations about the Russian opinion. This was the star flash for Tchomakoff! It seemed that the unusually complicated and lasting for 30 years Church Question would finally come to its end and the result would be in favor of Bulgarians!

Although the triumph of Tchomakoff seemed to come before time, there was no mistake in his expectations. Due to his efforts mainly, an irreversible process of bidding for the Bulgarian sympathies had already occurred in the relations between Russia and Turkey. Both countries had realized the high strategic significance of the Bulgarian ethnic lands. Inhabited by a consolidated nation they had the potentiality to be simultaneously a bridge to Constantinople and a barrier in front of those who wanted to take possession of it. Russia needed the first, Turkey – the latter. Moved by the energy of their rivalry, which, in fact, would prove to be a kind of cooperation, very soon the Church Question would get its solution in compliance to the spirit of the Bulgarian wishes.

In the beginning of 1869 the international environment changed. The Eastern Crisis calmed down. From confrontation with the Sultan soon the Russian Tzar passed to friendship with him. Soon after the case of the two projects of the Sublime Porte the Russian diplomacy recognized the Turkish right to interfere in the Church conflict. And what was more, it even started to exert pressure on Turks not to delay its solution. Thus, in spite of the Patriarchate's opposition, in 1870 the Exarchic Firman was issued and this was a document of high profit for Bulgarians. In compliance with it the Danubian Bulgaria and Northern Thrace would constitute the indisputable diocese of the Bulgarian National Church. All bishoprics in Southern Thrace and Macedonia, considered as *mixed* or *disputable*, could come within its jurisdiction after a referendum among their populations.

Firman was a compromise between Gregory VI's Project of 1867 for a canonical and narrow hierarchy and the two projects of the Sublime Porte for a common Nationwide Bulgarian Church, which should be not so canonical because of its extritoriality. The Firman was not an act just of Ali Pasha, the Grand Vizier, but mostly of General Ignatiev, whose influence in Constantinople was growing so vastly that he got the nickname *vice-sultan*.

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From Saul General Ignatiev became Paul for the Bulgarian national hierarchy and finally succeeded to push out Dr. Tchomakoff from his key position in the Church Question. He was replaced by Gavril Krastevich and hadji Ivanko Hadjipeniovich who were equally confidants both of the Russian Embassy and of the Sublime Porte. Now Tchomakoff was forced to struggle for the pro-

motion of his ideas concerning the Exarchate settlement and its policy, and also to regain the lost positions. In respect to this the next Chapter Four was entitled *STRUGGLING FOR EXARCHATE (1870-1878)*.

At that time four were the major questions:

- 1) to work out and to adopt the Statute of the Exarchate;
- 2) to implement (and to amend) the Firman;
- 3) to join the mixed bishoprics; and
- 4) to design the policy of the Exarchate in the situation of the new Eastern Crisis (1875-1878).

The role of Tchomakoff in all of them was very significant and at some moments it occurred to be even of major importance.

The discussions about the future Exarchate Statute started immediately after the publication of the Firman. Simeon, the future bishop of Varna and Preslav, presented Tchomakoff's ideas for the organization of the new Church, in the *Macedonia Gazette* in a long text, entitled *Urgent Reflections*.

He proclaimed a hierarchy organized in a modern style: economical, efficient and based on popular sovereignty. The conception provided for elections and mandates at all levels in the hierarchy for the realization of the popular sovereignty correctly and to its full extent. This, in its turn, needed:

1/ synodal, not personal Church, i.e. hierarchy governed by a commutable and elected collective body (Synod), with a chairman at the head, also elected and commutable, who should not be more than the first among the equals; and

2/ broad – in fact, prevailing – participation of the laity in the administration of the Exarchate through the institution of the *Lay Council*.

The impression one gets of *Urgent Reflections* is that it has dealt not with the setting up of a Church but of a new State. This was not by occasion. Neither once nor twice Tchomakoff stressed that in the East the Church was a body politic in religious dress. He was not thinking about religion and tradition. He was thinking how the Exarchate could impersonate the principles of modern democracy; how Bulgarians could obtain political experience; how they could learn to become rulers and as ruled to protect themselves from their own inherent, in some measure, apathy in order to control their rulers.

The ideas expressed in *Urgent Reflections* could be supplemented by the views that Constantinople had to become the seat of the Exarchate and that it had to comprise all Bulgarians (including the mixed dioceses, i.e. Macedonia and Southern Thrace, which should not become victims of the reconciliation with the Patriarchate). Thus we would have Tchomakoff's complete program of setting up the newly recovered Bulgarian hierarchy.

In 1871 a Bulgarian Church National Assembly was summoned in Constantinople to work out the Statute of the Exarchate. Krâstevich's project of the Statute was discussed, – both, Russians and Turks favored it. However, Tcho-

makoff still managed to get more support from the representatives in regard to the most important issues (mainly according to the decision about the electability of the Exarch – to be for life or commutable). His views, in fact, became the foundations of the adopted by the Assembly Exarchic Statute.

The first Exarch, Hilarion of Lovech, became an exponent of Dr. Tchomakoff. Turks, being under Ignatiev's pressure, quashed his election and Antim of Vidin who was Russophile replaced him.

Relapsed, to a certain degree, into the previous status of influence and wanting the Exarchate to be at a reasonably far distance from Russia, to be reformed in a modern style and to include all Bulgarians, Tchomakoff started a struggle for amending the Firman. That was the greatest issue of 1872-1873. Tchomakoff was supported by the Russophobe Midhat Pasha and was satisfied by the schism of September 1872, which to a higher measure was a result of his actions. However, in the Bulgarian community he remained totally isolated. Neither the laity nor the clergy were with him. A voting was held in the Mixed Council of the Exarchate on January 1873 and the opponents of Dr. Tchomakoff got in with a great majority. His ideas to reform the Church were also suffering a lack of public credibility.

Despite all that, he however managed to improve his position in the leadership of the Exarchate and to get in the First Regular Mixed Council (December 1873) elected by the highest majority vote.

Unsuccessful in his attempts to amend the Firman, Tchomakoff directed his efforts to more reasonable actions for a complete and quick enforcement of its most important stipulation (Article 10) – the annexation of the mixed bishoprics to the Exarchate. And this meant Macedonia in the first place.

Among the Bulgarian leaders it was Tchomakoff who mostly insisted not to leave Macedonia in Greek hands. It seemed he firstly faced the problem concerning the participation of Macedonia in the Ecclesiastical Movement while trying to realize his idea about a nationwide Bulgarian Assembly on the Church Question. Later on he established and maintained regular contacts with Macedonian activists and in the communication with them he was led by the will to provoke, guide and protect anti-Greek initiatives. In some places he acted directly, at others – indirectly. One of his most prominent collaborators in Macedonia was Stefan Verkovich, Serb by origin, a scholar in the field of Bulgarian history, culture, and civilization as Yuriy Venelin or Konstantin Irechek. Verkovich spent long years in the southwestern Bulgarian lands to study the local Bulgarian culture.

The attitude towards Macedonia became a dividing line in the programs of the two main tendencies in the Church Question – Russophiles and Nationalists.

In the name of the good relations with Russia and the Patriarchate, the first were ready to abandon Macedonia, as an entity or substantial parts of it, to Greeks. Thus, they hoped, the eventual Bulgarian Church could be established according to all formalities of the canons. They looked forward to a support from the Russian Tzar.

The Nationalists thought Bulgaria without Macedonia was not Bulgaria and for that reason in the name of the national unity Tchomakoff was ready to sacrifice the Church canons, considering them a Greek invention exclusively in favor of the Greek own interests. His high sense of national integrity became proverbial.

The year of 1867 marked a specific trace in his efforts for national unification. In that year his initiative for restoration of the Archbishopric of Ohrid could bring the emerging struggle for Macedonia to its end in favor of Bulgarians. However, the solution of the Church Question did not pass through restoration of one of the two mediaeval Bulgarian hierarchies (of Ohrid or of Târnovo) but through establishment of a completely new Church whose head finally would settle down in the imperial capital of Constantinople.

This was in compliance with the interests of the Sublime Porte, which wished to keep an eye on the Bulgarian Exarch. For the Bulgarians it was beneficial too that their spiritual center would be in the capital instead of being remote somewhere in the province. Tchomakoff as a pragmatic person gave up from the initial idea of Ohrid as a residence of the Bulgarian Pontiff. At the Church National Assembly in 1871 he stood behind the new concept and gained. Later on he would insist, without any result however, that the Exarch, residing in Constantinople would have to receive the name and the title of the Archbishop of Ohrid, which nowadays are in possession of the self-proclaimed Macedonian Church.

In the 1870s Tchomakoff still remained the firmest adherent of the idea for including Macedonia in the Exarchate.

Due to his initiative, in 1873 the Exarchate made its most serious attempt to radical solution, in its own favor, of the problem concerning the mixed dioceses. Then, with the silent agreement of Turks, Bulgarian bishops left for the capital cities of Thrace and Macedonia, Adrianople and Thessaloniki. However, under the pressure of the Russian Embassy, the Exarch was soon compelled to call them back. Infuriated, several Macedonian municipalities used the old but still efficient thread – the *Uniate*. Startled, Ignatiev made some partial concessions. As a result of them the Exarchate got the two most important Macedonian dioceses – Ohrid and Skopje.

The incorporation of Macedonia to the Exarchate, however, would become a main issue of the Church Question in its post-Liberation phase. During the 1870s the Bulgarian success in Macedonia remained uncompleted and uncer-

tain. Soon a new Eastern Crisis burst out and occurred to be fateful for Bulgarians.

During this new crisis Tchomakoff behaved as he did ten years earlier. Now, again in the name of securing the Bulgarian national identity and unity he was against Russia and for loyalty to Turkey. Remaining staunch to his old concepts and views, first he declared to be an opposition of the international intervention that was organized in favor of the Bulgarian people suffering of savage and fierce repression after the April Uprising. Then he dethroned Exarch Antim who was Russophile and replaced him by Joseph.

Thus, in 1877 Tchomakoff finally obtained his goal. The Exarchate functioned in accordance mainly with his rules; its head was a protégé of him and he himself, besides being member of the Turkish State Council, also was a sort of its unofficial Oberprokurator¹. But all this was not to last.

Just a year later, after the Peace Treaty of San Stefano was signed, Dr. Tchomakoff would occur in the position of a total outsider and would be stigmatized as a national traitor. Few would be apt to recognize him any services to Bulgaria, most would point at him as a servant to the executioners of this country. Ignatiev also got his revenge – because of him Turks defavored Dr. Tchomakoff once again.

We could only guess how he felt at that very moment. The Russian diplomat, against whom he was struggling for entire 13 years in favor of the Bulgarian integrity and independence, now served Bulgarians the very same integrity and independence on a platter. The merit this time was of even higher value – he served them a National State and not just a National Church.

The remaining of the Exarchate, itself, in Constantinople became problematic as well. The new head of the Sublime Porte, Ahmed Vefik Pasha, fired Tchomakoff from the State Council just to please Ignatiev. At the same time the Bulgarian society stigmatized him as a national traitor.

His collapse was complete – Russians defeated him with their generosity. Neither Turks, nor Bulgarians wanted him. On the other hand he saw the realization of the ideals to which he had devoted his past life. For this reason he broke off his Russophobia and returned to Plovdiv willing to participate actively in constructing the new Bulgaria.

#

The last Chapter Five deals with Tchomakoff's activity after the Liberation. Its name is *IN PLOVDIV AGAIN (1878-1893)*.

In the Eastern-Rumelian capital he succeeded to please the Governor, General Stolipin, and to become a manager of the healthcare institution till the Unification of Eastern Rumelia with the Principality of Bulgaria. First, he was

¹ In post-Peter the Great Russian Church an imperial high commissioner who was to be present at all meetings of its governing body (the Holy Governing Synod) and, in fact, to act as the administrator of Church affairs.

head of the state health sector (as Head Physician, respectively Chairman of the Medical Council, of Eastern Rumelia), and then in the public one – as a Chairman of the newly established Charity Society on the name of Saint Pantaleimon which, in fact, gave birth to the Bulgarian Red Cross.

The medical care was important but not first priority in Dr. Tchomakoff's list of activities after the Liberation. Quite a lot of time he spent to work in the public and political sectors.

In 1878-1879 he was active participant in the South Bulgarian Committee *Edinstvo (Unity)*. Despite his fanatic sense of national integrity, he judged that the international situation was not favorable to struggle for protection of the San Stefano Treaty. So, he joined the Moderates who proclaimed recognition of the Berlin Treaty insisting on softening of its clauses.

In 1878-1879 he continued to be closely involved in the issues of the Exarchate. Its seat for a short time became the Eastern-Rumelian capital of Plovdiv. Tchomakoff was active in making the definition of Article 39 (38) of the Târnovo Constitution. Due to this Article the Exarchate continued to manifest the Bulgarian National Unity. Exarch Joseph, who had conformed in all important issues with Dr. Tchomakoff for about 2 or 3 years, in 1880 took an individual decision to leave for Constantinople. This was a crucial moment for Tchomakoff. Further on he paid less and less interest to the Bulgarian Church.

In 1881-1885 he was elected an MP in the Regional Assembly. In 1882, belonging to the Liberal Party, he became Vice-President of its Standing Committee.

Dr. Tchomakoff was on the crest of the wave in the next great event of the Bulgarian history – the Unification of 1885. Either because he played a real role in the Unification project or because he could perform a representative role during its realization – it is still not quite clear, - but on September 6 he was invited to take the chair of the leader of the Transitory Government. He refused this honor accepting to be only Vice Chair of the Government. Then he went on a diplomatic mission to Constantinople, which, unfortunately, was not successful.

The united Bulgaria exonerated the Russophobian past of Dr. Tchomakoff. He gained over the sympathies of the new ruler and the respect of his Prime Minister. Prince Ferdinand called him *Papa* and in 1887 the National Assembly granted him a pension of the considerable for that time sum of 6 000 Levs. Stefan Stambolov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, said before the representatives in the Parliament: *Dr. Tchomakoff was among those who working for the solution of the Bulgarian Church Question, in fact, worked for the Liberation of Bulgaria.*

For a short time Tchomakoff was Minister of National Education (July-August 1887), an MP in the Sixth Ordinary National Assembly (1890-1893) and in the Fourth Great National Assembly (May 1893); since 1884 he became an

honorable member of the Bulgarian Literary Society, later the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

He died in November 1893.

#

The *EPILOGUE* puts an end to the book. Its first part is a summarized evaluation of Dr. Tchomakoff's activity and views.

Although his claim to be the Father of the Bulgarian nation cannot be confirmed, he has rendered great services to the cause of the national identity and unity. The Bulgarian nation was formed in quite a long historical period of time and was influenced by diverse factors, of which the Struggle for an Independent Church was the main and, perhaps, the most important one.

It is not quite correct to claim that he is the one who solved the Church Question. General Ignatiev and Ali Pasha did it. However, only God knows when this decision would be taken and what it would be like, if it were not for Dr. Tchomakoff.

He compelled, first, the Russian and then, the Turkish politics to apply the national principle to Bulgarians - that was the greatest achievement of his life. By reason of favorable circumstances and because of the high strategic importance of the Bulgarian territory, a kind of competition had started between these two Eastern Empires to gain the Bulgarian sympathies. As a consequence, very quickly and rather unexpectedly the Bulgarian National Church was born.

Usually his Turkophilic position after the April Uprising was considered as the greatest disadvantage of Tchomakoff. It was not unusual that some times his position had been proclaimed as a *national treason*.

It, however, was slightly incorrect because Tchomakoff, in fact, remained firm in his views. Many a time he declared them officially and openly and everybody knew about them. That's why it would be fairer if his activity in 1876-1877 was interpreted as a political fault. He simply repeated his successful political vision from the days of the Cretan Uprising in 1866-1869. If he could have foreseen that the Russians would gain the war of 1877-1878 and it would result into the establishment of the Third Bulgarian State, he most probably would have supported their policy.

Liberal democracy, evolutionism and Europeanism were in the list of Dr. Tchomakoff's major ideological values. However, nationalism was predominating. He was a fanatic believer in Bulgarians and with the same strong fanaticism he fought for maintenance and development of their national identity and unity.

Such nationalism is not aggressive and xenophobic. On the contrary, it is defensive and xenophilic. After their spiritual Liberation from Greeks, Bulgarians, in Dr. Tchomakoff's view, had to preserve and to perfect their ethnic identity but at the same time together with the other peoples of the Ottoman Empire had to merge into an *Ottoman nation*. According to Dr. Tchomakoff, this Ottoman nation should not be a monolith entity but a federative creation where the

single nations would manage to harmonize the contradictions in their interests, preserving, however, their specific features in compliance to the principle *Unity in Diversity, Freedom in Order*.

By the way, Dr. Tchomakoff was not only a great nationalist, he was also the most prominent Bulgarian Ottomanist.

What was the role of these two notions in the Bulgarian history?

It is hardly the right place now to substantiate that the Bulgarian national principle of intensive transition from traditional to modern society is *conditio sine qua non*.

However, Dr. Tchomakoff's expectations that Sultan's subjects would transform into a kind of supranational community were simply Utopian. The Ottomanism, as one of the main Tanzimat concepts occurred to be totally unsuccessful. Neither the separate ethnic groups in the Turkish Empire converted into a united Ottoman nation, nor the Empire itself survived. It died in terrible convulsions. It is hard to dispute the statement that if the Bulgarians had not been able to detach themselves in time, they would probably have shared the fate of the Armenians or, even worse, of the Kurds.

On the other hand, however, Tchomakoff's principle of getting rid of disadvantages of nationalism while preserving its incontestable advantages is of certain importance and actuality. It is in full harmony with the today's efforts of Bulgaria to join the club of the united Europe.

As an illustration it is enough just to mention that the European Community, attempting to expand to a pancontinental size, is guided by the very same notion about the international relations. And this is expressed in its motto, adopted on May 4, 2000 – *Unity in Diversity*.

Then, space is given to the memory of Dr. Tchomakoff and to his house in Plovdiv – an original and respectful monument of his life.

The second part of the *EPILOGUE* is dedicated to his descendants. He had two daughters. His younger daughter, Elena, died in October 1878. The other one, Marie, married a Russian officer who attached to his family name the surname of his wife and renamed to Vladimir Petroff-Tchomakoff. In 1894 she became lady in waiting of Princess Maria-Luisa. Marie Petroff-Tchomakoff spent her time in public activities; she took an interest in fine arts and wood-carving. Her greatest contribution to the Bulgarian culture was to publish Dr. Tchomakoff's Archive².

The Petroff-Tchomakoffs, Marie and Vladimir, had four children – three daughters and one son.

Hélène and Marie distinguished themselves among the daughters. The eldest daughter took the name of her departed aunt, her sister took her

² Shopov, At. Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff. Zhivot, Delo i Arkhiva. Sofia, 1919 = *Sbornik na Bâlgarskata Akademia na Naukite*, Tom XII (Shopov, At. Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff. Life, Work and Archive. Sofia, 1919 = *Collection of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences*, volume XII).

mother's name, Marie. They were also ladies in waiting at the Bulgarian court. Their salon was renowned. Hélène was a favorite of the Bulgarian Queen. In March 1941, a few days after Bulgaria's joining the Axis Powers, the two sisters demonstrated their pro-British sympathies. This is why, and despite the King's reluctance, they were exiled. In the autumn of 1944 they came back to their Fatherland for a short time. Two years later they shared the destiny of the King's family: they were exiled.

Marie, a woman of independent spirit and artistic skills, was living mainly in Paris and Rome, and earned her living decorating or playing small parts in the cinema. Hélène, beloved by Queen Giovanna, remained with her in Estoril until her death in 1965.

The only son of Marie St. Petroff-Tchomakoff was christened with the name of his grandfather Stoyan. He studied law in Paris, then entered the Diplomatic career. He was at the front during the Balkan wars and the first World War. Then he returned to diplomacy. His first mission was as Secretary of the Bulgarian Delegation in Neuilly-sur-Seine for signing the Peace Treaty. Then he was appointed First Secretary of the Bulgarian Legation in London. In 1928-1933 he was Head of Bulgarian Legation in Budapest as Chargé d'Affaires and after that in Washington, till the beginning of 1936, representing his country as Plenipotentiary Minister. In 1936-1938 he was again in Sofia, first as D.G. of Political Affairs and subsequently as General Secretary. Then he occupied the posts in Stockholm (1938-1939), in Brussels (1940-1943) and Tokyo (1944) as Plenipotentiary Minister.

Understanding that a communist regime was imposed to Bulgaria, he remained in the West and participated in the initiatives of the patriotic emigration. First he lived in Switzerland, then – in Argentine, and last – in Brussels where in 1966 he ended his earthly road.

Like his Mother and his sister, Stoyan Petroff was granted with artistic talent too. He preferred flowers and birds as subjects of his paintings. In 1964 Stoyan Petroff organized an exhibition in Brussels which had a success. He was a skillful writer, as well proficient in English and French. In the *Bulgarian Review*, a magazine of the bulgarian emigration published in Brussels, he used to write till the end of his life 1966 historical and political articles in English and French. He wrote in English his book of memories *Spirit of Diplomacy*, successively translated into Bulgarian and, at the moment, about to be published in a second edition with *L/K Publishing House* (Sofia).

In 1928 Stoyan Petroff married Lilly De Poorter, English of Belgian origin. They had two children: Vladimir (now in the USA, married for a Mexican and has a daughter, Stoyana, also living in the USA) and Sonya (jewelry designer, now in Italy). In the second part of this book, Sonia presents her *Family Memories*.

La bourgeoisie, la partie la plus éclairée de la nation Bulgare, celle qui a puisé quelque instruction à l'étranger est réunie autour de cette ville et devient chaque jour plus hostile du gouvernement Ottoman.

Heureusement que pour ce dernier le parti politique Russo-Bulgare de Philippopoli n'exerce qu'une faible action sur la masse de la nation concentrée dans les Balkans où les Bulgares de cette ville sont désignés sous la dénomination méprisante de Tsintsars (métis Gréco-Bulgares).

Agréez, Monsieur le Marquis, l'hommage du profond respect avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être de Votre Excellence le très humble et obéissant serviteur [...]¹

AMAE, *Turquie-Andrinople, Correspondance politique*, vol. II, ff. 115-118 (копие СИ-БАЛ).

№ 159

1868, февруари 19, Цариград. – Статия на д-р Чомаков² в лондонския в. *Pall Mall Gazette*: излага в сбита форма разбиранията си по българския национален въпрос

THE BULGARIAN QUESTION STATED

June 1, 1868

The interesting and remarkable letter which we publish below is from the pen of one of the leading Bulgarians at Constantinople, and was originally sent to us in French. With the exception of a very brief letter in our columns two years ago, we believe this is the first time that any Bulgarian has addressed an independent European public in person. In such remarks as we have found occasion to make from time to time, notably before and during the hypothetical Bulgarian insurrection of last autumn, upon a question which is in reality the heart and core of the whole nationalistic and political case in European Turkey – little though that may be understood by Palmerstonian Philo-Turks or doctrinaire Anti-Turks –

¹ Следва нечетлив подпис – най-вероятно принадлежащ на Charles-Edouard Guys, френски вице-консул в Одрин (1865 – апр. 1867).

² Авторството на Чомаков върху тази статия личи от идентичността на найните идеи с онези, развити в брошурата *La Question Bulgare* на Коприщански; и сега, както по време на ученичеството си при Каирик, той се подписва не с фамилното, а с бащиното си име – само че не в гръцка (*Йоаниди*), а в сръбска форма: *Иванович*; по този начин е изписвал това име и брат му – напр., в писмо от февр. 1861 се подписва: *Салчо Иванович Чомаков* (*Шопов, Ат. Д-р Стоян Чомаков, с. 596, д. 536*); с това ние само потвърждаваме предположението на М. Стоянов от неговата *Българска възрожденска книжнина-2*, № 1429.

we have already given as much prominence as we could to the chief facts and arguments so clearly stated by our present correspondent. But it is manifest that these must be far more calculated to make a due impression when coming by a native Bulgarian, writing in his own individuality, and therefore admitted to speak with authority, than when taking their chance as mere English exposition. We prefer to let the writer speak altogether for himself in the present case, unaccompanied with comment, which we reserve. It is fair to state that we have altered an expression or two in order to ensure immediate and distinct comprehension of the writer's meaning; thus, when he says that Russia just lent Bulgaria to *Greece*, it becomes necessary to substitute the expression *the Greeks* for that of *Greece*. This last term would otherwise run the risk, nay, undergo the certainty, of being understood in English as referring to the new Hellenic kingdom, which, in reality, represents a transmuted and not an original type of Greek nationalism; resting its claims and basing its political action on modern Hellenism alone, altogether a new force, and having little to do directly, however ready to profit by their policy, with the extra-Hellenic or Romaic Greeks who act in Turkey as chief depositories of orthodoxy and Byzantinism, and who traditionally exercise after a fashion an Imperial influence of their own under and within the Turkish Empire – the old Fanar, in a word. In conclusion, and most of all, we would beg our readers not to understand the writer's *Bulgaria* as restricted to the country conventionally so called in Europe, but as comprising the whole country, with slight deduction, between the Danube and the sea of Marmora, where Bulgarians are the exclusive or the numerically predominant Christian inhabitants; the chief seat, indeed, of the opposition to the fewer but dominant Greeks, as here described by our correspondent, being the great towns of Adrianople, Philippopolis, and the like, which are situated out of our conventional Bulgaria, and in our conventional Rumelia, which last, taken as it stands on our maps, is a fiction, and means anything or nothing as the case may be.

[Lord Strangford]

Constantinople, Feb. 19, 1868

Your readers may not be unwilling to see a succinct statement of the Bulgarian part of the Eastern Question presented them by a native Bulgarian, at this time of revived interest in that important problem. No one can possibly fail to recognize the importance of the Bulgarian element in

the great question now agitated on the Bosphorus. Bulgaria is not only the vastest and the most abundant in resources among the districts of European Turkey; it also happens to be the only one in which there is no idea of revolt against the Porte; the only one in which a quiet, industrious, and sturdy population needs nothing but a regard for certain elementary rights to make it fully satisfied with a Government to which it has been accustomed for four centuries, even though it be more exposed than any other to the intrigues and invitations of Russian Panslavism by reason of its Slavonic origin. These few words are enough to show how great should be the prudence and how conciliatory the attitude observed by the Porte in dealing with us Bulgarians.

You are aware of the position imposed upon Christians by the Ottoman conquest. Their religious chiefs thereby became charged, not only with the spiritual administration of their respective flocks, but also with a large share of their temporal affairs as well, such as public education, moral censorship, civil suits, contracts, wills, and the like. Turkey, in fact, may thus be called, up to a certain point, a federation of theocracies under the sceptre of the sultan. The ethnic name of these various communities happening to coincide, as a general rule, with the denominational or sectarian name in each case, the populations under Ottoman rule have been able to retain their lay nationality intact under shelter of their religious privileges, and thus to enjoy more activity in public life than would be imagined at first sight. To explain this it is enough to remember that in Oriental Churches the choice of the Patriarchs and their councils lies with the body of the people.

Little by little, however, the Bulgarians, though the most numerous single race submitted to the Crescent, came to be excluded from the advantages of this organisation. The supple Fanariote Greeks managed in no long time to make the Porte believe that the Bulgarians, being *Greek* by religion, should therefore be under the direct authority of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople. A rural population dwelling in the fields and mountains, oppressed by the Mahometan Beys, sunk in ignorance, directed by unskilled or irresolute bishops, the Bulgarians were unable to struggle against the cunning townsmen of Greek race. Ultimately, their last national episcopal see, Ochrida, was lost to them last century through the intrigues of the Greek Patriarch Samuel.

By obtaining the jurisdiction of Bulgaria from Turks the Greeks made a virtual conquest of that country. They felt the inadequacy of their own small and scattered race to carry out their ambitious views single-handed, and they resolved to assimilate and incorporate the numerous and sturdy people dwelling by the Balkan. It was then that the work of denationalisa-

tion commenced for the Bulgarians. Greeks were everywhere placed at the head of Slavonic bishoprics; in the churches and schools the Slavonic tongue was displaced by Greek, and such establishments were viewed as the actual property of the Fanariote Government. That word is not too strong, for what I have written above will show how large a share of temporal authority really devolves in Turkey on the spiritual head of a denomination. This authority was not idle in Fanariote hands, what between Turkish apathy and Bulgarian torpor. As agents of the pashas resident in their palaces, as assessors of taxes, as schoolmasters, priests, judges, these Greeks benumbed Bulgaria and made it a passive instrument at the will of the Fanariote Pope. It is hard to bear the yoke of a dynasty against the will; but it is far harder to be enslaved to an entire people where a new tyrant is found at every step. Imagine such a tyranny whetted by the *esprit sacerdotal*, by Creek avidity, and by the ambition of the Hellenic *grand idea*, and you may conceive what we Bulgarians had to suffer. Our very name at length disappeared and became lost to the world. It was necessary to turn Greek, and to make a Greek himself even to his name, for any Bulgarian to obtain any of the advantages reserved for the dominant race. Thence the worst tyranny to us of all – that of the apostates. Those who did not become Greeks became helots, and were ground down to the earth between the taxation of the Government and the countless vexations of the Greek clergy.

What did Russia, the patron of Slavism, say at this sight of a Slavonic people at the mercy of Greek vanity and rapacity?

Russia let matters alone for a very good reason. Russia just lent Bulgaria to the Greeks until the fall of the empire might enable her to reckon in turn with her associates. She expected that it was the Turkish Government that the Bulgarians would hold responsible for Greek oppressions. She let the Greeks sow the seed of misery in the hope that some day the Turks might reap the harvest of revolt.

Bulgarian vitality, however, proved stronger than all the evils of tyranny and ignorance. The stir in the East during the Crimean war broke the gloomy coping of our prison house, and let the light of day in upon its captives. The Bulgarians asked themselves why they were deprived of the autonomy systematically accorded by the Porte to Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Maronites, Druses – why they, six million of men, were the helots of a million of Greeks? Why a Slavonic race, devout by nature, and largely tolerant and broad in its spiritual conceptions, should be kept down grovelling at the feet of Greek superstitious idolatry? It is not a futile question of

mere dogma which is to be sought for in this Bulgarian revolt against the Greeks. It is the sentiment of injured nationality joined to the aspiration of a people to participate in a life from which it has been long severed; yet to do so calmly, and without seeking to plunge in the abyss of senseless ambition. We do not desire anything beyond that amount of temporal autonomy which is necessarily involved in such religious autonomy as the Porte accords to each community. Deliverance from the Greeks, direct communication with the central Government, the right of electing our national clergy by our own people, the use of our own language in the Church services, and its cultivation in schools, constitute the whole amount of the Bulgarian demand. As for the rest, we are content to rely on the interest which the Porte itself finds in the gradual introduction of reforms. Fidelity to the Government seems to us only the just return for the preservation and guardianship of our nationality, for the Bulgarians fully comprehend that the wreck of the empire would simply throw them headlong into the gulf of Russism.

Thus it is that Russia manifests no sympathy for the revival of a Slav nationality which seeks nothing from her. In none of her treaties with Turkey has she ever mentioned Bulgaria. The reason of this is clearly enough. Russia has no desire to see a numerous Slavonic community rise into a nation at her side, stamped with feature and character other than those of Czarism; in that she sees a danger to her beloved Panslavism. She would fain see Bulgaria lulled to sleep in the lap of Grecism till the day of the final triumph of Greco-Russian policy in the East; biding that opportunity for sweeping up Bulgaria as her own property, a Slavonic waif and stray due, as matter of course, to the god of Panslavism.

Unfortunately, Bulgaria, though at length awakened, stands unnoticed and alone; and Russia has been, therefore, striving to turn that awakening to her account on another tack. To a people whom she was hitherto content to sacrifice to a handful of Greeks she is proposing to become a full-blown Bulgarian kingdom – nay, a constitutional one. In support of this object she recently dispatched bands of ruffians into the interior, who were arrested by the Bulgarian peasantry themselves. Seeing how useless it is to try and make them revolt against the Porte, she has now resumed her old policy of lulling them to repose on the bosom of the Fanar as before.

It is easy to see why Russia dreads the existence of our nationality, and wants to combine Greek and Bulgarian elements together in one Church; but it is by no means so easy to see why the Turks should entertain or affect any similar fear or desire. It is now ten years that the Bulgarians secession from the Fanariote Church-establishment has been a virtual fact, but our separate status is not yet legally recognised; and, however

well disposed may be the Government, its real intentions still remain a mystery. From this cause there exists among us a certain feeling of discomfort and disquietude, almost a disorganisation which may even lead to very serious consequences for Turkey itself. Yet in its separation from Hellenism, and in turning a deaf ear to Russian incitations to revolt, has not Bulgaria weakened the most immediate enemies of the Turks? Has she not signally vindicated Turkey against the ceaseless calumnies of Russia? It may be said that the fidelity of to-day is no guarantee for the fidelity of tomorrow; but what can there be for the Government to fear in the modicum of autonomy we claim? Moreover, the greater the amount of national consciousness the Bulgarians acquired the more they will dread being merged in Russian unity, and the more will they cling to Turkey. Let it also be remembered, that the increase in means of communications, and the progressive equalization before the law now at work in the empire, will tend to deprive this autonomy of all separatist character. It is common to flatter the Turks with the prospect of a fusion among the races of their empire; well, the way, the only possible way, to bring about such fusion is to satisfy the legitimate desires of each race. Individuals will only consent to unite in a common centre under the condition of there finding free room to exist. Meanwhile, if there be one thing more than another that Russia fears and that Turkey should desire, it is the existence, under the Ottoman sceptre, of a great Slavonic race, well governed, free, and content with its lot. The Turkish Government, if it chooses, can thus destroy the pretensions of Russia to the monopoly of Slavism.

Ivanovitz.

Strangford, Viscount. *A Selection from the Writings of ...*, Vol. 1, pp. 223-228.

№ 160

1868, март 26, Цариград. – Писмо от д-р Чомаков до Георгаки Стоянович в Пловдив: изложение по повод обвиненията срещу Атабей; праша френската си брошюра по Църковния въпрос; Георгаки Стоянович ще жени дъщеря си

τῇ 26 Μαρτίου 1868 // Κ[ωνσταντινού]πολει

Φίλτατε ἔξαδελφε,

Τὸ γράμμα σας μὲ τὴν αὐστριακὴν πόσταν ἔλαβον μένχαριστη-
σην μου.

Τὴν ἔκθεσιν διὰ τὴν κατηγορίαν κατὰ τοῦ Ἀατὰ μπεῖ εἶδον· καὶ
αὖριον θέλω παραδώσει εἰς τὴν ἐφημερίδα· ἥδη ώμίλησα τῷ κ. συντακτῇ.

Εἰς τὸν λὸρδ Στράγφορδ ἔστειλα ἥδη κάμποσα ἄρθρα· εἰς Γαλλίαν δὲ μέσον τοῦ Κ. Μπουρὲ ἀκόμι πλειότερα διὰ τῶν ὁποίων ἡ κοινὴ γνώμη εἰς τὰ δύο κράτη αὐτὰ ἐσχημάτισε μίαν ἰδέαν περὶ ὑμῶν ἀρκετὰ εὐνοϊκὴν· καὶ τὴν μπροσούραν ἔστείλαμεν εἰς ὅλους τοὺς μεγάλους ἄνδρας τῆς Εὐρώπης.

Σας ἀσπάζομαι μὲ πλήρη ἐλπίδα ἐντὸς ὀλίγου νὰ ἀσπασθῶμεν ἐδὼ ἀρχήτερα παρὰ εἰς τὴν Πατρίδα·

·Ο ὅλος εἰς ὑμᾶς // Δ-ρ Στ. Ι. Τζομάκοφ

БИА-НБКМ, ф. 782, а.е. 86, л. 668-671. Оригинал.

№ 162

1868, юни 19, Цариград. – Статия на д-р Чомаков в лондонския в. *Pall Mall Gazette* : българите са отделна от руси, сърби и гърци нация; те притежават свои собствени национални цели

DISTINCTIVENESS OF BULGARIAN CHARACTER AND OBJECTS

June 10, 1868

To the Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Sir, — Amid the manifest complications of the Eastern Question it is no less essential to the interests of the Turkish Government than to those of the Bulgarian people themselves, that the latter should no longer be credited by the world with any necessary participation in the ambitious and revolutionary schemes of their neighbours, which are undermining the throne of the Sultans by reason of their race or their religion. It is true, no doubt, that the Bulgarians are Slavs like the Serbs and Montenegrins; it is likewise true that, like the Greeks and Russians, they follow the forms of the orthodox rite; but it is a blunder so gross and palpable as almost to deserve being called intentional to ascribe to the Bulgarians a complete identity of political tendencies with the above nations on the strength of certain points of general relationship.

From their first appearance in history the Bulgarians have always borne the mark of a distinctive national character. Ages passed under Ottoman rule have not failed to leave a further impress upon that nationality deep enough to constitute a permanent distinction between it and the other Slavonic races. This distinct personality the Bulgarians are at this moment asserting and demonstrating by ideas of their own, aspirations of their own, and policy of their own. Before the Turkish conquest the only bonds which united the Servian and the Bulgarian kingdoms were those of a common origin and language. But common origin and language cannot

of themselves suffice to make a single people out of the various tribes of a race. Beneath general characteristics there exist certain special traits, produced by geographical position, by the nature of climate and soil, or by the course of circumstance, which set up and establish trenchant lines of demarcation among nations of the same stock, and which determine the species within the genus. Thus, just as the first comer is able to distinguish the Anglo-American from the Englishman, the Hollander from the German, the Spaniard from the Portuguese, so also the Bulgarian must be viewed apart from the Pole, Bohemian, or Servian. The Slav domain is a wide one, and its extent necessarily conduces to the modification of each family by special conditions of life, which must fall short of identity when occurring under different latitudes, and in totally dissimilar geographical areas.

To come to details. Only ask those who have had any experience of Servia and Bulgaria for their opinion. They will tell you that, so far from there being any intimate natural affinity between the Servian, a warrior, a man of declamation, a lover of adventure rather than of work, and the steady, matter-of-fact, hard-working Bulgarian, the very reverse is the case. From all this it is clear that the establishment of Pan-slavism would be simply a blow aimed at the individual rights of each Slavonic people.

As for the Greeks, their first encounter with the Bulgarians was sword in hand, and they had the worst of it. Later on they made use of Turkish rule to take their revenge, fastening on to us under it as leeches of the Fanar. Up to this day they obstinately deny us our ecclesiastical rights, while we on our side never lose an occasion of testifying estrangement from everything which leads up to or bears upon the great Hellenic question. It is very evident that similarity in religious forms can have no power to combine two such antipathetic spirits as ours and the Greek. I use the word *forms*, because, at bottom, the Bulgarian's religion is not at all that of the Greek. With him, religion is more an affair of politics than anything else: it is, in fact, his emblem of nationality. With the Bulgarian, as with all the true Slavs, religion is a profound and a self-nurturing sentiment, abiding in the heart unmoved by the fluctuations of worldly interests. Nor do we resemble Russia any more than do other Slav communities; we love individual liberty, and we are strongly imbued with a sense of the rights of property, so that Russian centralisation and communistic ideas are repugnant to us. Our language is as different from Russian as French from Italian: that is to say, certainly not enough to merge into Russian by natural fusion. Historically, Russia has never taken a step to attach us to her. As her influence arose in the East she came to consider us as an inferior sort of Slavonic race, one wholly passive, and doomed to pass under Russian rule by the mere force of circumstances. Not a word of us in her treaties with the Porte, for she found it best that the Greeks should wield our resources and

turn our strength to account in order to undermine the Turkish empire. Hostile, now as ever, to our separatist aspiration, she is now multiplying attempts to induce us to resume our former position of Greek Helots. It is true that, being deprived by the Greeks of our own ecclesiastical books in Slavonic, we get them occasionally from Russia; but this is an idle fact, which really has no other significance than as a warning to the Porte of the risk it runs by continuing to abandon us to Greek persecution. Our passive attitude in presence of the bands lately sent by Russia to stir us up in revolt, and our emphatic disclaimer of fellow-feeling with the Cretan insurgents, are striking proofs of our want of sympathy with Russian tendencies, and of the political independence of our own conduct.

Why should we sacrifice this independence? We are a people of six millions, robust, hard-working, intelligent men; we live in a wide and fruitful land, and we can well suffice for ourselves, and do our own work. Accustomed for centuries to Ottoman dominion, we see in it the protecting guardian of our natural individuality. We are thus attached to Turkey by the double tie of habit and self-interest. Verily the Turkish Government will be most ill-advised if it prefers a mere routine obedience against the grain to such an attachment as this, based on reason. One resemblance there is which exists between us and the peoples of Servia and Greece – the desire we feel of holding a position more worthy of us as a working people in an enlightened age. But it is not in revolt that we demand such an amount of reform as we seek; we look for it in the justice and good sense of the Turkish Government. It is for the Porte to do away with the only reason which can possibly lead the world to believe that we are ranged in the ranks of the enemies of Turkey.

Koprishtenski.

Strangford, Viscount. *A Selection from the Writings of ...*, Vol. 1, pp. 228-231.

№ 163

1868, септември 22, Цариград. – Статия на д-р Чомаков¹ в лондонския в. *Pall Mall Gazette*: причините и смисъла на поведението на българското население при появата и боевете на Хаджидимитровата чета

MORAL OF THE LATE EVENTS IN BULGARIA

September 22, 1868.

Under the above heading we have just received another letter in French from one of our native Bulgarian correspondents, whose

¹ За авторството на Чомаков върху тази неподписана статия заключаваме от уводните думи на лорд Странгфорд.

previous communications published by us in the course of the past summer may not have escaped the memory of our readers – though we say that with hope rather than with expectation. This is what he says: —

Let us turn our attention for awhile to the recent Rustchuk échauffou-rée as a fresh landmark serving to point out the real direction of our Bulgarian tendencies; a new ray destined to enlighten both the Turkish and foreign Governments upon the subject.

An explosion of the same kind was brought about last year; one from which the foreign Power which prepared it expected great results. By dint of perpetually bragging of the force of Panslavism, and by incessantly dwelling upon the utter want of cohesiveness in Turkey, this Power talked itself into a belief in its own words; it imagined that nothing was easier than to break up Turkey, and nothing more fascinating than Panslavism. Fully persuaded of this, it hoped, naïvely enough, that the flight of hateful birds of prey let loose by it on the banks of the Danube would, as a matter of course, stir up a thousand angry swarms of the same brood all over Bulgaria.

One knows how that expedition turned out. It demonstrated that the Ottoman elements had not altogether lost cohesion. It showed some cause to the world for thinking that Turkey might be, after all, something more than a mere encampment in Europe; that it offered, in short, firmer soil for the foothold of reform and progress than is usually represented by Western statesmen in quest of troubled waters, and by journalists à *quinze centimes la ligne*. We shall make no exaggeration if we set a high value on the manifold experience thence accruing to Turkey. It has gone far towards disenchanted the enemies of Turkey, and to reconciling the public opinion of Europe with that country. Had the Bulgarian nation responded to the appeal of the stranger, or had it even hesitated in presence of the lure here held out to it, the Porte would have found itself compelled to face troubles very much more serious than the Cretan difficulty. I do not hesitate to place in strong relief the service which Bulgaria then rendered to the Government, for, indeed, the spontaneous service of an entire people is honourable to the Government on which it is conferred.

This year the sanguinary experiment has just been tried over again, evidently moved by the same hand, concealed though that may be, and with just the same result. The sallying-point of the brigands, that is to say the north bank of the Danube, and their isolation when confronted by repressive force, prove now as before that they have no connection with the country, and that it is from foreigners only that they receive inspiration and arms. Those among them who survived the first encounter near Rustchuk took flight at once for Philippopolis. At this point it is well to recall to mind all the instigatory missions and propaganda of which this town and province were the scene last year. The brigands were led to expect a favourable welcome there in consequence, and to calculate on recruiting largely among the Bulgarians in a district where they are pretty nearly left to themselves for want of Ottoman garrisons. But this expectation has not come to anything, and they are perishing in the heart of Bulgaria without evoking the faintest sympathy by their audacity and peril.

Now please remark, Sir, that this fact of the Bulgarian people turning a deaf ear to these inflammatory appeals cannot any longer be laid to the score of mere apathy, the inertia of a body without any wants and ignorantly unconscious of itself. It is some twelve years now that definite aspirations towards a higher future, towards political life and association in common for a purpose, have been prevailing among this people; you have the proof of it in their unanimous and persevering assertion of their rights to ecclesiastical autonomy. Moreover, a foreign propaganda has been incessantly at work in every direction, rousing and stimulating intelligence and passion all over the country. The Government has done little enough to interfere with this *revival* – and it so happens that it has gained by the abstention. It is incontestable that the proofs of attachment afforded it by the Bulgarians are neither the result of compulsion nor of imbecility; they come from the conviction being verified that Bulgarism having free play, conscious of its interests, and essentially (*foncièrement*) friendly to Turkey, is actually a constituent element of Ottomanism.

What remains for the Turkish Government to do? To be consistent with itself, surely; to continue its liberal policy towards the Bulgarians, to protect aspirations of theirs from which it has seen that it has nothing to fear; to assume direction of them, and thus lead them on so as to be merged into identity with its own policy.

Here we come naturally to the interminable question of ecclesiastical autonomy. The time is past for treating that from a historical or theological or juristic point of view; the case is too urgent for mere quibbles and chicanery. The Government has before it the task of conciliating and identifying with its interests the Bulgarian people; and this without loss of time, for these claims of the Bulgarians must no longer be looked upon as being di-

vested of political significance. As a matter of fact, the Porte has been allowing the Bulgarian people for the last twelve years to contemplate and take to heart the prospect of obtaining ecclesiastical autonomy. The hope of that has been our first ray of light after a night of five centuries, and therefore is fondly cherished as one cherishes the memory of his birth. Ignorant as yet of public life outside of the sphere of the ecclesiastical, the Bulgarians have centered all their ideas of moral and material progress as well as of politics in this. What has attached them to the Government with so much energy is simply the hope of attaining this result of ecclesiastical autonomy. The Government should, properly, have withheld from them all encouragement from the very beginning, both explicit and implicit, and compelled them to silence; but to seek to hush up these aspirations now, after so long a lapse of time, would simply be to plunge into the very depth of unpopularity, caused by the bitterest disappointment and the most violent disenchantment. It is too late to think of leading them off the track by other attractions; the mind of the people is in a fever from this religious question, which must be calmed before any other paths can be laid open to its activity.

I know of no other Government which would not be only too happy to see its subjects absorbed in a preoccupation so inoffensive as this. It is hard to say what possible interest the Porte can find in forcing its Bulgarian subjects to have a Greek Patriarch instead of a Bulgarian one. That which should not be a matter of indifference to the Government, however, is delay in yielding concessions on a point very dear to the Bulgarians and perfectly indifferent to itself. Let it only listen to the language addressed us by the revolutionary committees at Constantinople, Bucharest, and Slimnia. *What have you got in return for your fidelity? Not even your religious independence, so long promised you. Why, the Cretans have got more by their revolt than you by your devotion.* The Bulgarians have hitherto been deaf to all this, but common sense tells us that is it not good to expose either the best of men of the best of peoples to too long a trial and too continual a temptation.

The cause of the Porte's delay in this affair is assuredly to be looked for in foreign influence. On the one side the Russians are intriguing because they are afraid of the prospect of a decided unanimity arising between the Porte and its numerous Bulgarian subjects; on the other side we have the pretensions of Catholicism, sinuously moving along in Jesuitical tracks and seeking to defer the solution of this question as long as possible, in the fond hope that the Bulgarians, weary of waiting, will end by going over in a body and throw themselves into the arms of Rome. The Bul-

garians are fully aware of each game, and they know that if they get what they want it is the Turks alone who will have given it them. Now is it not better for the Turks to be masters in their own house for once at least, and to settle with their subjects without foreign interference? This consideration alone ought to determine their action in our favour. The Porte's declared aim now is fusion as far as possible among its different races; how can it prepare better for such fusion than by granting the Bulgarians their wishes in a way to detach them from Western influences, and thereby leading them to look on itself alone as their natural asylum? They have long been living quietly side by side with Turks; once put in possession of their religious independence the union between Bulgaria and the Empire will be complete, and will be in a condition to hold its own against far more formidable antagonists than bandits lurking in the swamps of the Danube.

You have here the plain truths, which seem deducible from considerations of the recent events near Rustchuk. The present opportunity is well suited to cure the Porte of its mistrust of our people. Too long it has been taking the word of our enemies and believing that Bulgaria was a menacing cloud hanging over the destiny of Turkey. It depends on the Government itself to find in Bulgaria a firm rock, to which it can lie securely moored in the hour of tempest.

Strangford, Viscount. A Selection from the Writings of ... Vol. 1, pp. 231-236.

№ 164

1873, юни 3, Битоля. – Писмо от д-р К. Мишайков до Чомаков в Цариград: моли го да не оставят Пелагонийска епархия в Патриаршията; искат си ръкоположения им за владика Евстатий; Георгаки Стоянович да издейства пъзволение да служат в новия си параклис

τῇ 3 Ἰουνίου 1873, Βιτωλίας

Αξιότιμε φίλε κ. Στ. Ζομάκωφ

Ἄρα οὐχὶ μόνον εἰς τὰ ἀπόκεντρα μέρη δηλ[αδὴ] ἐν ταῖς ἐπαρχίας ὑπάρχουσι γραικο-μάνοι Βούλγαροι καταπιέζοντες καὶ κατατρέχοντες τοὺς εἰλικρινεῖς Βουλγάρους τοὺς προσπαθώντας τὸν Φαναριωτικὸν ζυγὸν ἀποτινάξαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ πρωτευούσῃ. Αὐτὴ ἡ κορυφὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας πράττει τὸ ἴδιον καθ' ἡμῶν κρίμα!! Ἐξοχώτατε! Κάμετε παρακαλῶ παραστάσεις τῇ Αὐτοῦ Μακαριότητι ὅτι δέον νὰ παραδειγματισθῇ τουλάχιστον παρὰ τοῦ γραικικοῦ Πατριάρχου, ὅστις δὲν φέρεται πρὸς τοὺς ὄμογενεῖς αὐτοῦ οὗτως καὶ οὕτε ἀπωθεῖ τὰ πλησιάζοντα αὐτὸν

l'homme! Et je veux être heureuse, maintenant que je sais que j'en suis capable! N'est-ce pas cruel de m'en empêcher, de gaieté de coeur?

Peut-être vos jugements sont-ils justes en ce qui concerne les autres, mais ils ne le sont pas pour moi et le bonheur est quelque chose de tout à fait relatif. Il serait un Rothschild, qu'il ne serait pas pour moi plus qu'il est, et il n'aurait le sou, qu'il ne serait pas moins. — Qu'est-ce que vous avez à objecter contre lui? N'est-ce pas l'âme la plus noble, le caractère le plus élevé qui ait jamais existé? Vous ne pouvez pas lui refuser cela, vous ne serez pas à ce point injuste! Il est mon supérieur sous tous les points de vue et c'est moi qui suis indigne de lui.

Vous prenez en considération le jugement le monde en fera, tandis que ne voulez pas même entendre mon opinion à moi qui suis seule intéressée en cela. Cher papa! ne me rendez pas malheureuse pour toute ma vie! Je ne crois pas que je mourrais, si vous disiez *non*, mais en tous cas cela me ferait désirer la mort.

Votre fille dévouée Marie

Частен архив на Соня Петрова-Чомакова. Оригинал.

№ 167

1879, март 15, Пловдив. — Доклад на сър Хенри Дръмънд Уулф, британски член на Комисията за организиране на Източна Румелия, до външния министър на Великобритания маркиз Солсбъри: посетил го д-р Чомаков, който го осведомил за настроенията на българите от областта

Philippopolis, March 15, 1879 // (received April 2.)

My Lord,

Yesterday I received a visit from M. Tchomakoff. I think this gentleman must be known to your Lordship. He is a Bulgarian who lived at Constantinople for a long time as Agent for the Bulgarians, and more recently as a Councillor of State.

I believe he was well known to Sir Henry Elliot, and supposed to be friendly to the policy of England. I have hitherto been unable to see him, as shortly after my arrival he was much afflicted by the loss of a daughter.

M. Tchomakoff told me that he thought the Bulgarians would be quite disposed to conform peaceably to the Treaty of Berlin, and to accept the proposals of the Commission, of which they approved, on three conditions, viz., the abolition of the Balkan garrisons, the appointment of an European Governor, and, if possible, a mixed occupation.

He said that the Balkan and Rhodope garrisons would shut in the province with a ring of iron not only irksome and dangerous to the province, but ruinous to the Porte. They could not be kept up under 100. 000

or at least 50. 000 men, and the money necessary for this purpose, if expended on public works in the province, would bind it far more securely to the Empire. The Balkan garrisons were also a danger to northern Bulgaria. He was opposed to the nomination of Rustem Pasha, whose experience in governing the Lebanon was not applicable here. As to the mixed occupation, he had once suggested it to Sir Henry Elliot, and regretted that the recommendation had not been adopted. In the present agitated state of the country the presence of foreign troops would produce a tranquillizing and otherwise beneficial effect.

I suggested that the absence of the Balkan garrisons might lead to the proclamation of union with northern Bulgaria. He replied that the proclamation might be made whether the garrisons were kept up or not. But he did not at all agree in my apprehensions. The Bulgarians of Eastern Roumelia, when once secured against the return of former abuses, were prepared to accept the decisions of Europe. They knew that Europe had determined on the separation, and felt it was useless to dispute the point. But in many respects the inhabitants of this province preferred what they had heard of the institutions proposed by the Commission to those projected for Bulgaria. In that Principality there would be many public expenses, from which the province would be spared, a civil list for the Prince, possibly a standing army, and, perhaps, a costly policy of enterprise.

He begged me to bring these considerations before your Lordship, assuring me again and again of the desire of his fellow-countrymen to accept the settlement of Berlin, and the proposals of the Commission, but urging the danger that would follow the introduction of the Balkan garrisons and a Rayah Governor.

I have, &c. // (Signed) H. Drummond Wolff

OTBOR Blue Books. 1879. No 9. Part II, p. 718.

№ 168

1889, февруари 26, Пловдив¹. – Писмо от д-р Чомаков до Маршала² на двора на княз Фердинанд: извинява се, че поради обострения си ларингит не може да присъствува на вечерята, на която е поканен

Monsieur le Maréchal,

Comme l'[h]umidité d'aujourd'hui s'est fait sentir tant soit peu sur une laryngite, dont j'ai souffert et me reste encore quelque vestige, j'ai cru que

¹ Мястото определено по съдържанието – по това време князът е в Пловдив (Бурбулон, граф дъо. Български дневници, с. 118 и сл.).

² Граф Амеде дъо Форас, Велик маршал на двора на княз Фердинанд след смъртта през 1888 на граф дъо Гърено.

chure de mon père écrite il y a 45 ans, dans des temps obscurs et où l'oppression était à son comble. Ce n'était guère une époque propice pour l'explosion de rêves mégalomanes et pourtant Votre Majesté verra les limites que mon père affirmait pour la Bulgarie publiquement, telle qu'elle existait alors, malgré le double joug turc et phanariote.

Je prie Votre Majesté d'excuser cette intrusion et de croire au profond dévoûment avec lequel j'ai l'honneur d'être // de Votre Majesté
la très humble et reconnaissante servante // Marie Petrov

Частен архив на Соня Петрова-Чомакова. Оригинал.

№ 175

1936, Ню Йорк¹. – Реч на Стоян Петров-Чомаков при откриване на българска художествена изложба

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The reason I feel particularly happy to inaugurate this Exposition of Bulgarian Art, is that, through an awkward and somewhat unjust destiny the Bulgarian Nation has in the past manifested itself to the attention of the outside world, not so much by its cultural achievements, however real they were, as by the tragic trials to which it has been submitted.

Yet, in an age as remote as the 10th century when in Central and Western Europe, people were still engaged in inter-tribal wars or hunted in dense forests and no one even thought that Oxford and Cambridge were to become famed centers of culture, the Bulgars had founded a powerful state extending from the Carpathian Mountains to the Egean, and from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, in which under the guidance of wise czars and pious monks, letters and arts flourished. Old Icons and frescoes preserved up to this day in innumerable churches and monasteries show that the Bulgarian artists of the 12th and 13th centuries while showing an undeniable Byzantine influence even outdistanced their masters showing in their conceptions a true originality.

This artistic development however was cut short when towards the end of the 14th century the Turkish invasion submerged the whole of the Balkans. But while this catastrophic tidal wave only splashed the walls of Vienna, lingered a little longer in Hungary and gradually though slowly receded from Rumania, Serbia and Greece, for Bulgaria it marked the beginning of a dark period of subjugation, which ended only towards the end

¹ 30 години по-късно Ст. Петров-Чомаков на страниците на *Bulgarian Review* се връща към тази изложба (вж. *Petroff-Tchomakoff, St. Excerpts from a Diplomatic Work by Stoyan Petroff-Tchomakoff, a Former Bulgarian Minister in Washington*); датата и мястото са определени по тази статия.

of the 19th century. Bulgaria subjugated and devastated fell into a lethargy of 500 years, groaning under the exactions of pashas and the still more perfidious intrigues of the Greek clergy, which tried to stifle all national traditions, and to maintain the people in oblivion of their great past. It is easy to understand that under such conditions no room was left for the development of art, especially painting. But in order to measure the power of the effort which later Bulgaria had to produce in order to catch up with the rest of the world, we must keep in mind that while other nations similarly subjected to the Ottoman yoke, were all this time kept by one of their frontiers in contact with the civilized world, it was not so with Bulgaria. Surrounded on all sides by Turkish Vilayets, she was more narrowly walled up, more rigorously separated from the world, than the barons of the Middle Ages shut up in their castles. For this reason the great popular movements which took place precisely within that period and brought about to renascence of arts had no echo in Bulgaria. So that when she finally awoke to independent life she had everything to learn, everything to do in order to attain the level of her neighbors and that she succeeded to do, by a conscious and gigantic volitional efforts, wasting neither time, nor energy.

The Bulgarians have a passionate, ardent cult for their land, for which they are ready to sacrifice everything. It is not to be wondered therefore, that once their beautiful country liberated, they strove to represent in their artistic production all that they saw in their country – its nature, its people and also the ideals towards which it should strive.

This attachment to the native land is best illustrated in the work of Boris Denev, some of whose paintings you will see here. He was born and educated in Tirkovo, the capital of the ancient tzars, and it is Tirkovo, that ethereally beautiful city, girdled by the ribbon of its river, with its magical position and its houses like a jeweled crown upon a King's head, that he paints and paints again, in every mood, in every phase. And it is well that he should be moved to show the city to the world. Nobody can photograph it. No one has succeeded in adequately describing it. Its spirit, – the spirit of baffling inaccessibility, of remote mystery and romance, he has caught and made to live.

Other painters like Gudjenoff, Ivan Tabakov and Chokanov whose works you will see presently, embrace in their work not only their native towns but all the breadth and width of their country, and try to describe with the brush its variated beauties. Bulgaria as they depict it, and as it is, has a clear sky and bright sun. It has stern forbidding mountains to master; deep dark woods to wander through; a tumultuous sea grumbling upon a gentle shore to bathe in and deep sinuous valleys to entice you along foaming streams up into lonely solitudes.

In the words of an American authority¹ Bulgaria is a myriad of small fields of many shades, waving one against the other; daisy-filled meadows dancing about the feet of grassy hills; whole seas of flaming poppies streaming gaily over wide plains; thousands of bashful red-tiled villages crowning hill-tops, nestling in valleys, a straggling through woods, clustering around hoary monasteries, or slung along rivers. Bulgaria is a golden harvest field covered with brightly dressed peasant boys and girls who gather ripened grain and nourish tender romances. Bulgaria is a concert, a symphony and a choir. Harvest girls in the cool of the evening slowly sickling, sing folk songs in unison and harvest boys working behind them take up the strain and answer the song. On holidays the squares of the villages quiver with the trilling of tireless bagpipes played by jolly men about whom brightly dressed circles of happy boys and girls clasping one another by the hands or belt weave round and round the intricate steps, hour upon hour.

But best of all, little shepherd boys standing beside their flocks on lofty hillsides, blow upon frail and delicate flutes poignant, lovely, insistent melodies, all a tremor with the hopes and dreams, and pains and sacrifice of unrecorded generations which, for more than a millennium, keeping flocks, tending gardens, making silver ornaments, and embroidering exquisite flowers on home made garments, watched the Romans march in conquest over their plains, Barbarians sweep across their mountains, the Crusaders stream down their valleys, the Turks submerge their whole land in the oppressive darkness of subjugation, five centuries long and finally the Russian hosts come with the dawn from the east to deliver them.

This is the scope and inspiration of Bulgarian modern painters, and just as in the little shepherd's songs, vibrate the repression, suffering and aspirations of past ages, the work of these painters express in line and colour the sad and joyful romance of Bulgarian life; they perpetuate and glorify past fidelity and heroism; they exalt and beautify the acts, scenes, objects and relations that make up every day life.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would not have fulfilled my mission, if I did not say a few words about the antique silver jewelry, which also forms a part of this exhibition.

As in other countries, in Bulgaria too, the decorative art of the 13th and 14th centuries was chiefly employed for ornamenting the churches. Although it may be supposed that the artists also satisfied the needs of the ordinary public, it is nevertheless clear that the best productions were destined for the use of the church, as was customary in those days. The gold

¹ R. H. Markham (cf. *Petroff-Tchomakoff, St. Excerpts from a Diplomatic Work by Stoyan Petroff-Tchomakoff, a Former Bulgarian Minister in Washington*, p. 31).

and silver ornaments of that period are comparatively few nowadays. Later the rule of the Turks greatly influenced and changed the economic conditions of Bulgaria. The disinclination of the governing race for any kind of manual work, the primitive means of communications and the poorly organized state of foreign trade, let to a greater development of the minor arts and crafts than that of the other branches of art.

The distinctive feature of the Bulgarian applied arts is their undeniably popular character. The master-workers belonged to the people and worked almost entirely for the people. They passed through no particular school and the more aristocratic arts of the towns remained unknown to them. Their only standard was the art tradition which had been kept alive among the people and for this reason the work which these artists produced has often retained much that is characteristic of very early art, in style as well as in workmanship. All popular art is conservative and this observation is particularly applicable to the applied arts of Bulgaria, which were much less affected by foreign influence than were their architecture and painting.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the destiny of Bulgaria has often been compared to the disappearance of a stream beneath the sands of the desert and its uprising in a distant land, there to renew its fertilizing potency. The revival of Bulgarian art after the emancipation of the country was the outcome of the national movement of Bulgaria and a proof that the old art-traditions were not dead, but still lived among the people and only required some external impulse to produce brilliant work. This impulse came from the struggle for freedom which roused all the energy and moral power of the nation. The fact that artistic activity was so strongly affected, is manifest evidence how deeply the artistic feeling was rooted in the soul of the people and what an eminent position art always held in the intellectual life of the Bulgarians.

Частен архив на Соня Петрова-Чомакова. Машинопис.

№ 176

1943, септември 5, Букурещ¹. – Писмо от Лили Петрова-Чомакова до царица Йоанна: съболезнования за смъртта на цар Борис III

²Madame,

La nouvelle si douloureusement inattendu de la disparition prématu-
rée de Sa Majesté le Roi, adoré de son Peuple et respecté par le monde
entier m'a bouleversée profondément.

¹ Мястото определено по датата – по това време Стоян Петров-Чомаков е посланик в Румъния.

² Най-горе вляво надпис: LEGATION ROYALE DE BULGARIE

Je pense avec douleur au grand vide que cette perte cruelle laisse dans l'existence de Votre Majesté et celle de Vos enfants.

Puisse Dieu bénir les pas de Sa Majesté le Roi Siméon et vous donne ainsi une consolation et un but dans la vie.

Je suis de coeur avec Votre Majesté dans son grand chagrin et je La prie de croire au profond respect avec lequel je suis de Votre Majesté la fidèle et dévouée sujette

Lily Petroff-Tchomakoff

5-9-[19]43

ЦДА, ф. 3к, оп. 12, а.е. 2564.

№ 177

1961, януари, Рио де Жанейро. – Статия на Стоян Петров-Чомаков¹: нов деспотизъм потопи Източна Европа в средновековен мрак; да пазим свято спомените за миналото си, защото само те ще ни помогнат да дочакаме достойно неизбежното възкресение на свободата

A MESSAGE

Midnight darkness descended upon the ancient lands of Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, while no voice was heard from heaven, nor lightning fell to prevent the perpetration of the crime.

It seems hardly credible that five hundred years after that Renaissance proclaimed what was thought a final victory over the dark forces of barbarism, four hundred years after the great land discoveries opened new horizons to mankind, nearly two centuries since the great emancipatory movements brought liberty to millions, – a new wave of barbarism should be advancing and a new Dark Age be settling upon the world.

The shadow is advancing by degrees and threatens to smother the free spirit of nations and to destroy their national cultures, the product of many centuries of effort and evolution.

The subjugated peoples perceive only the faintest ray of light in the murk that envelopes them. But, no matter how bleak the horizon, how overcast the skies, how hopeless the out-look, there still remain memories of the dear past and, as long as there will be memories, there will be hope.

Memories are the living reflections of a dead past. Those scattered few of us who survived the disaster, who knew the old country, who have

¹ Авторството установено по сведения на Соня Чомакова-Петрова; срв. и тук подолу, д. 178, с. 560.

seen and have heard, keep religiously such memories. They have also preserved notes, journals, letters, old newspaper clippings. Placing all these precious fragments together, the past is reflected back to us in the light of other days, phantoms glow again with the colour of life and sphinx-like silence moves to words and sounds.

Solitudinem facerunt, pacem appellant – they make a desert and call it peace – is what, according to the Latin historian Tacitus, a British chieftain said of the Roman conquest. The same applies to the graveyard silence which covers now a great part of Europe. As in Rome, so in silent Eastern Europe, despotism is breeding nations of urbane parrots, ambitious operators and submissive automata. With no end in sight they are engulfing all human energy; the arts have to glorify the régime; philosophy and education must function as tools of conformity; science is enlisted to create synthetic substitutes. Resistance is punished by imprisonment, exile and death. The prisons are filled with inmates held without trial. Drastic censorship laws have been decreed and the church deprived of its last vestiges of liberty. Alone, the memories of the past remain and serve to keep alive in the enslaves nations a spirit of resistance endowed with enormous explosive forces.

Let us keep carefully every thing that speaks of our lost country, and let us not wait for a new Paissii to reminds us that Bulgarians were once free people who lived with the exuberance of youth, had strong and proud personalities and maintained a rigid code of morals. They were people who tilled fields which were their own, who tried to move straight in spite of the bewildering crossroads of modern life and were ready to make the supreme sacrifice in order to have their country free, more cultured and more prosperous.

Let us gather and preserve all that reminds us of our country and build up a precious treasure which we will hand down to posterity so that they could await with pride and confidence the bright day when on the tortured face of our Holy Mother, Bulgaria will no longer run tears of pain but tears of joy and exultation before the wonderful sight of resurrected liberty.

In keeping alive the memory of the past in the subjugated peoples and in the social and intellectual elite of the world, we will do the most anyone can do for the time being against tyranny. And let us not forget that no tyranny has been everlasting. Nations alone are eternal.

Observer — Brussels

№ 178

2002, март, Рим. – Семейни спомени на Соня Ст. Петрова-Чомакова: представят се внуките и правнуките на д-р Стоян Чомаков

FAMILY MEMORIES

Preface¹. First of all I would like to thank Dr. Ilia Todev, who took it to his heart to write a new and complete biography of Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff, in the light of new and unpublished documents which he discovered in the State Archives. Actually, it is high time to establish Dr. Tchomakoff's role in it's right perspective.

It is certain that Dr. Tchomakoff was not always understood and this was a disillusion for him. He and his collaborators had fought to establish - an independent and autonomous Church, which was essential for the making of the Bulgarian nation. Some people accused him of being Turcophile which, for them, meant enemy of an independent Bulgarian state.

But this was untrue.

Dr. Tchomakoff was against revolutionary methods, believing that, in the historical circumstances of his time, much more could be obtained through legality with the approval of the Ottoman Empire.

It is true that he mistrusted the Russians, because he understood that they were not so much interested in Bulgaria's fate, but in it's territory. A Bulgarian uprising would provide the occasion (in fact, greatly encouraged) to the Protectors of the Slav Christian orthodox brothers not only to liberate them, but also to turn Bulgaria into a client state and install themselves lastingly in the Balkans.

We were liberated in 1878 and Russian influence lingered on for a long while.

Tchomakoff had anticipated by 75 years Russia's design on his country. This took place in 1944 and for many his apocalyptic visions became reality. Not surprisingly, during the following period of Soviet domination he was stigmatized by the communists as a national traitor and his role in the Bulgarian revival was minimized.

I was asked to fill in with my memories a long gap in between the time of Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff, whose life and historical importance has been amply written about, and his descendants.

I will try to make these memories take shape, elusive as they are. With the help of letters, photographs and reminiscences of conversations had

¹ Тук и до края получерният шрифт и подчертаванията са на Соня Петрова-Чомакова.

with the family, who unfortunately were very discreet and reticent about their own life and achievements. They thought it ill-bred to converse much about their private concerns and those involving others. Furthermore most of the family souvenirs such as letters, portraits, photographs, objects were destroyed during the bombardments of Sofia.

This makes it more difficult for me, but I owe it to my ancestors because it is through them, through what they had been and what they achieved that I exist: to belong to such a family is a privilege. In fact, I was more prepared than others to affront the difficulties of a nomadic life and of incessant changes by the fact that I was born into a diplomatic family. The past forges the future, indeed; without a past, our own existence has no roots.

The latter part of my life was as an exile, although when you are very young you do not realize what it means: the future is ahead of us, we have dreams and easily adapt ourselves to a different way of living. But for my parents' generation, being cut off from their country, having lost everything, including their birthright, being deprived of proper means of subsistence – all this was very hard indeed.

My father suffered morally as he was a great patriot and very attached to his beloved Bulgaria. In his diplomatic career he had always done his best defending the interests of his country and staying away from all kind of political intrigues, of which he wanted no part. But came the time in 1944 when Bulgaria was forced into the Soviet orbit as an unwilling satellite. He found himself in total disagreement with the political course struck by the new masters of Bulgaria.

He took leave of the diplomatic career and suffered all the consequences it entailed, to him and his family. Luckily this decision was taken while he was abroad, otherwise it would have been much worse: it would have meant the loss of his freedom and the control over his own life and opinions.

The people who remained in Bulgaria and suffered 45 years of communist rule, with all the nefarious consequences it implicated, are to be deeply commiserated. The life of exiles and political refugees was not that easy, cut away from their family's, no legal documents, difficulty to survive, many in refugee camps awaiting for eventual emigration papers for America, Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, an involuntary *diaspora*.

The Bulgarians, being a hard working and intelligent race used to adversities, managed to create with time respectful position for themselves.

Some never wanted to return as they could not forgive the treatment they had received by their co-nationals. But others had a great nostalgia for their home land. This feeling was reinforced by our parents, who never tired describing Bulgaria, the natural beauties of the land, their personal lives and our national history of which to be proud.

So when the Wall fell and I returned to my rodina, I felt a deep emotion and the strong sensation of belonging to this country, even though every thing was lost and few personal links remained. All these feelings where shared by my cousins and friends and others, who were eager to do something positive for the country, and also to show that the old generation of exiles belonging to a certain elite still existed and wanted to participate in the national reconstruction. The people of Bulgaria have a great interest and curiosity in their historical origins and recent past both of which had been altered by the communist regime.

Our country had acquired such a bad reputation abroad, to the point that all negative political actions were stamped as *the Bulgarian way*. Even if the mentality has changed, I still feel the vibrant desire of the Bulgarian people to go ahead, and I hope that their vitality will bring the country to a European standard.

I must address a few words of gratitude to the countries that made it possible to have a new life, and that accepted us giving us security, not to mention the friends we had – and the new ones we made – in Switzerland, Argentina, Belgium, France and Italy.

After ten years a great part of Bulgarian people are disappointed by the political class, who instead of concentrating on the needs of the Bulgarian people and the reconstruction of the economy have, first of all, assured their own well being with ostentation and have forgotten the fundamental rules of honesty, giving place to corruption and personal ambitions. This leads the population to a loss of confidence and confusion. They sway their votes from one party to another and have no more endurance of hardship, they want an immediate result, which is not possible. Of course I do not speak for all, there still are some politicians who have retained a sense of honour and integrity and ambition for their country.

A lot of time has been wasted. Corruption is becoming endemic and has penetrated the administration and is contaminating the mentality of the people. Not that other occidental countries are exempt, but democracy is established there since a much longer time and the base of economical and social protection is more secure. The harm done is less dramatic than in a country where everything has to start from scratch. That is why the political class should give the example in order to obtain stability, which would insure continuity to the process of economic growth. The develop-

ment of social services are essential to the nation. The reorganization of the agricultural policy is indispensable to Bulgaria.

This is a very simplistic outlook but contains a base for better governing.

The Balkan countries have not been considered till now to be on the same level of the occidental European countries. This is a further reason to prove our capacity of becoming first class citizens in our own countries, without losing our national identity and gradually integrating into the European community.

#

I. Stoyan Petroff-Tchomakoff was born in Plovdiv in 1888 and spent his first years in the family house built by his grandfather, Dr. Stoyan Tchomakoff, who had been in the XIXth century the main leader of the movement for an independent and autonomous Bulgarian Church.

This issue, as a part of a wider strategy, was vital for the development of a future independent Bulgarian State, since it would inevitably imply the return of the national language in the schools and the Renaissance of the national spirit. It would prepare the civil autonomy and, above all, freedom from the predominance of the Greek Phanariots, descendants of the old Byzantine oligarchy who had a great influence in Constantinople: the *Megali Idea* that inspired them consisted in the attempt to hellenise Bulgaria and eradicate its culture.

But with time Dr. Tchomakoff's political strategy prevailed, was accepted and later sustained by the Grande Porte.

This ideal battle of Dr. Tchomakoff started in 1857 and lasted up to 1870, year in which the National Bulgarian Church was recognized. Most of all, he feared the Russian panslavisme.

The Russians thought that Bulgaria should be grateful to the point of becoming a Russian-dependent State, Bulgaria had other ideas on the subject. As a consequence Russia never stopped interfering, organizing attempts on the life of the Bulgarian Rulers, and refusing to recognize them as such. Tsar Alexander III nearly declared war on Bulgaria and was only stopped by the opposition of the Great Powers.

Dr. Tchomakoff used to say: *We will be free of the Turks, but who will free us from the Russians*. He had in a way foreseen that what Tsar Alexander III had not achieved the Soviets would.

All this happened before the period we are speaking about. At this time (1887-1888), he was Minister of Public Instruction in the Stoiloff Government. He was part of the delegation that went to Ebenthal to receive Prince Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg-Gotha*. They developed a relationship of

* Ferdinand had offered himself as a candidate for the Bulgarian throne. The Grand Sobranie (the Parliament) elected him as Prince of Bulgaria on July the 5th, 1887.

mutual respect and friendship, which lasted up to his death. It was a difficult time for Bulgaria as Russia would not recognize the sovereignty of the country, nor recognize Prince Ferdinand.

His grandson Stoyan spent a happy childhood surrounded by his sisters and parents; there was a great movement of intellectuals and politicians visiting, all working for the future of Bulgaria. It was the first years of a partial independence for Bulgaria. The house was built in an occidental style, Prince Ferdinand often stayed there as he loved being in Plovdiv, and the children used to play together.

In a nostalgic letter dated 1973 Princesse Eudoxie wrote to my aunt Marie from Althausen evoking some moments of their childhood in Plovdiv:

A Pâques tant de souvenirs se réveillent, pour moi c'est surtout Philipopolis. Votre maison maternelle, les fleurs du petit jardin autour d'un bûnar dont nous convoitions l'exploration (défendue naturellement!) C'est la vue sur les Tepé, la Maritza et au lointain Balkan; c'est un kommuluk clandestin avec des petits voisins dont nous envions les randonnées dans le terrain vague d'une mosquée sous nos fenêtres. C'est à Sv. Konstatin et Elena les chants, les cierges, les bouquets de zdravets et de bosilk, les beaux oeufs rouges qu'on ne connaît pas en Occident, comme l'odeur de l'encense de chez nous n'est pas cet acre odeur de cire à cacheter qui émanent les églises Européennes. Pâques c'est Xristos Veskrese, répété mille fois pendant les trois jours de Fêtes, les arbres en fleurs les menzuxari et laleta multicolores dont le jardin foisonnaient. Ce n'est pas le temps glacial, les Messes dépourvues de tout mysticisme, dont on doit se contenter ici actuellement, la raideur du Frohe Ostern du déjeuner sans Kusunak et Pita! Nous avons de la neige pendant la Semaine Sainte, et jamais je n'ai eu aussi froid dans une Eglise, que le jours de Pâques...

It probably was in this atmosphere and surroundings that unconsciously Stoyan developed a deep love for his country, a sentiment that accompanied him all through his life and was even more intense during his years of forced exile: he physically missed Bulgaria.

By 1893 his family life changed completely. His grand father died.

Prince Ferdinand came to Plovdiv to assist at the State Funerals and asked Stoyan's mother, Marie Petroff-Tchomakoff, to come to Court as Princess Marie Louise's (Prince Ferdinand's wife) lady in waiting. It was a great honour and she was very grateful for the opportunity to leave Philipopoli, as she said in one of her letters to her son: *Qu'aurais je été si on m'avait oublié dans mon coin à Philippopoli? Un miracle qu'on m'ait tiré de là. D'abord je n'aurais pas pu t'envoyer à Paris...*

Stoyan's mother, Marie Tchomakoff, was born in 1853. When only nine years later, her mother Kiriaky (Milkoff) died, her father Dr. Tchoma-

koff was distraught, it was his political dedication that saved him. He left for Constantinople to pursue his mission, leaving his young daughters in the care of his sister Rada. He never remarried. As he said, he was married to his political life.

Marie adored her father and felt rather lonely as she saw very little of him. Later on he rented a big house in Constantinople and the family was reunited. They had an English governess. Here she studied in the French school, translated many French authors into Bulgarian and had her first contacts with a cosmopolitan and political world, as their house was frequented by many important personalities.

They returned to Plovdiv in 1878. Their financial situation was not brilliant as Dr. Tchomakoff had spent practically all the family fortune for the Bulgarian cause. In Plovdiv she met a Russian officer who had come with the liberation army, Vladimir Petroff. Born in Verkhne Uralsk (Orenburg) on December the 7th, 1847 – he had joined the Army in 1866 and had been a companion of arms of General Kouropatkin. He followed a military career as an officer in the artillery and became, after the liberation, one of the instructors training the new Bulgarian Army.

Vladimir and Marie fell in love and, much to the dismay of her father, wanted to get married. They discovered that they had great affinities, both were lonely, Vladimir alone in a new country without any family ties, Marie had lost her sister Elena who was her close companion, her father was too involved in his political life and was not able to give her the attention she wanted nor to exteriorize his affection although he loved her very much. So these young people found many ideals in common.

This was a blow to Dr. Tchomakoff, whose Weltanschaung was totally anti-Russian. He was already deeply grieved by the recent loss of his other daughter Helen and was totally opposed to this marriage. He finally gave in, after Marie's hunger strike and having read her touching letter. So this was a happy ending, when they had a quiet wedding in 1879.

Vladimir Petroff remained in Bulgaria after the Tsar Alexander III recalled all his officers, hoping to leave the young Bulgarian army in the lurch (1885). The Tsar was furious that Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia had reunited without his approval and was convinced that the Bulgarians would be vanquished by Serbia, who had immediately reacted to the reunification by declaring war. But the exact contrary happened.

The young army under the guidance of Prince Alexander Battenberg defeated the Serbian Army at Slivnitsa. Vladimir was decorated with the cross of St. Alexander. He remained with his family and adopted his new country.

* See the letter included [N 174].

He later took part in the Balkan War (1912-1913). He was in command of the 4th Artillery Battalion. His son Stoyan as a young lieutenant ran into him at the battle of Tchataldga. He died in Berlin, where he was operated for a serious illness in 1920.

Four children were born: Helen, Sonia, Stoyan and Marie.

As I said before, in 1893 their life changed as they moved to Sofia, which had become the Capital. In those days it was a very small town, just emerging from under the Turkish yoke. Since the arrival of Prince Ferdinand its aspect was rapidly changing.

Marie Petroff-Tchomakoff spent most of her time at Court, she accompanied Princess Marie Louise in her travels and made many personal contacts and friendships; she received a lot and her salon was the first international one in Sofia. After the death of Princess Marie Louise (1899) she had more duties than ever, became grande dame du Palais, organizing charities, helping with the Red Cross, trying to get a Bulgarian hospital to function for the wounded soldiers of the russo-japanese war (1904-1905).

All this in addition to her usual duties at the Palace, and taking care of her family. After Prince Ferdinand's second marriage to Princess Eleonore von Reuss (1908, later Queen ^{*} Eleonore) she became her chief lady in waiting.

The Palace had given them a small villa in Tchamkoria, in the heart of the mountains surrounded by beautiful forests. Most of their friends had villas there and Prince Ferdinand, who had a passion for shooting and botanical studies, spent a lot of time in his hunting lodge in Tsarska Bistritza. The whole family loved making excursions, sometimes getting up at four o'clock in the morning to climb the Mussala in order to witness the sunrise.

Marie had a talent for wood carving, decorated the wooden beams of the villa. She also painted, mostly flowers, and painted the panels around the ceiling. (King Ferdinand had some of her flower paintings). From her letter dated 4th of November 1907 on the occasion of Prince Cyril's birthday: *Monseigneur... Je profite de l'occasion, pour présenter à Votre Altéssse Royale, l'orchidée qu'Elle m'a fait l'honneur de me faire peindre. Malheureusement les couleurs en sont toujours encore fraîches, le mauve que je possède séchant très difficilement...*

The summers were lovely, a paradise for the children and their friends, away from the heat of the town. Her husband went for long solitary

^{*} On Oct. 5th, 1908 Prince Ferdinand and the Government made an unilateral declaration of independence and Ferdinand accepted the title of Tsar of the Bulgarians. It was a breach through the thirty-year-old Treaty of Berlin.

walks in the forests. He had not really integrated himself with Bulgarian life and to the social life of his wife. He spent a lot of time secluded in his study where his children came to listen to the stories of his youth, amongst other, the conquest of Turkestan with the Russian army. He remained an uprooted person, and with time, although it had been a happy marriage, they drifted apart because of the different lives they had to lead.

Marie realized the importance of sending her son abroad, giving him the possibility to develop his faculties and receive an education which prepared his future. Her own father had been sent to Andros, as at the time there were no proper schools in Bulgaria, and later to the faculty of Medecine in Pisa where he obtained his diploma, and for a year to Paris where he took a specialization. All this gave young Stoyan the opportunity to enlarge his vision of the world and away from the provincialism of those days in Bulgaria.

So, after the Bulgarian primary school, Stoyan was sent to Paris at the Lycée *Henri IV*, which was a grim experience for a young shy Bulgarian boy, to be in boarding school, not knowing anybody and not really knowing the language. He told me that in his first essay although he handed a blank sheet, he was not the last, as another boy had made a spelling mistake in copying the title.

His mother writes to him in 1905 a rather depressed letter evoking the difficulties of managing a budget and all the material problems and vexations it entailed. She says she had not been brought up in a way to enable her to carry the burden of material worries of life, but does not complain as she had so many other compensations. She encourages him to take advantage of the propitious environment to develop the faculties of his intellect and the delicate feelings of his soul and not to let them go to waste. He later went back to Paris to take his Law Degree. These experiences permitted him in later life to always be at ease in his various posts and become one of the most brilliant and representative Diplomats.

By 1910 Marie's children were established in life. Her son Stoyan had entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, her daughters had been for a few years at a finishing school in Brussels (*Le Couvent des Oiseaux*). They led the usual life of young girls in Sofia. Because of their mother's position they were friends with the Royal children. Hélène became Princess Eudoxie's lady in waiting, and their friendship lasted till the end of their life. They had intended to write their memoires, but nothing came of it except a numerous correspondence. Her younger sister, Marie, soon followed her steps. I will come back later to their lives.

Meanwhile their mother remained at Court as Queen Eleonore's lady in waiting until the Queen's death (1917). She herself died in 1923.

Stoyan had hardly entered the Foreign Service when he was called back by his regiment and sent as secretary delegate to the Turkish-Bulgarian frontier Commission in 1911, but no concrete decision was obtained. So he was back in Sofia.

When the first Balkan war started he did not want the privileged post his mother had obtained for him, he wanted to be at the front. He got himself transferred to his cavalry regiment (1st regiment of Royal Hussars) and took an active part in all the wars including the First World War. He ended as Captain and was pluri-decorated (*Military Cross for Valour, St. Alexander with swords, Cross for Military Merit*)

After the end of the war (1918) he returned to the Ministry. In 1919 he took part in the Peace Conference at Neuilly-sur-Seine as secretary of the Bulgarian Delegation. In Sofia, I was told by some of his friends, that he was considered a good looking young man, and many girls hoped to attract his attention, but he was oblivious of this fact and rather shy and self-conscious. He and his fellow officer friend Boris Kissoff used to promenade up and down the *Tsar Osvoboditel*, creating a small storm in the hearts of the young girls. They went to balls at the *Union Club*, but my father preferred watching from the gallery instead of dancing.

He had had a memorable experience at a Court ball, where he was waltzing away enthusiastically, carried away by the tempo, when to his horror he slipped and fell: this marked the end of his dancing career. He loved riding his horse Khirgiz from the outskirts of Sofia to the slopes of the Vitosha mountain in beautiful unmarred surroundings, stopping in Kniajevo for a glass of beer and delicious kebabtchés. He told me he was often invited to go riding with Captain Collins, one of the British officers, in the middle of the winter in deep snow and freezing weather, he could not imagine why. He soon found out: Collins had fallen head over heels in love with a very beautiful young friend of his, Yanka Zagorska; he only talked about her and needed encouragement. He finally married her and, all though the marriage did not last (she remarried an Italian diplomat), he always took care of her and at his death left her everything. Captain Collins was one of the two officers who accompanied the Bulgarian Delegation, from Sofia to the Peace Conference in Neuilly. And through his tact he had often made their situation easier.

Because of the war, Stoyan's diplomatic career had been interrupted, so it was only in 1921 that he was sent to London as first secretary at the request of the then Bulgarian Minister Dimitri Stancioff, and later as Counsellor under Minister Hadjimisheff. During the same period he acted as Bulgarian Government Agent at the Anglo-Bulgarian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal (agent na Pravitelstvoto pri Anglo-Bulgarskia Smesen Arbitra-zhen Sed).

He won almost all the cases pending against Bulgaria, claiming war indemnities. He was much appreciated by the English judges who complimented him for the way he pleaded his cases in English, better than a professional lawyer. Here are some excerpts.

Extracts from report No. 112 of January 7th 1924,
sent by the Bulgarian Minister in London to
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Sofia.

I consider it my pleasant duty to inform you that the Head of the Balkan Division at the Foreign Office told me:

Your Secretary who at the same time discharges the duties of Bulgarian Government Agent to the Anglo-Bulgarian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal, has made the best impression on the Tribunal, and our Judges and Agents have told me that Mr. Petroff-Tchomakoff enjoys there a very good reputation, that he has got thoroughly familiarized with the British ways, that he studies the cases he has to defend thoroughly and achieves considerable success in presenting them.

On his part, the Administrator of Bulgarian Property, Mr. Egerton Grey, told me;

Your Judge and your Agent defend so well the Bulgarian interests before the Tribunal that the claims filed by British nationals have been reduced to a low minimum, and soon the Administration of Bulgarian Property will have no more payments to make on such claims.

D. Stancioff, Minister

Letter, dated 4 February 1927, from Claude Mullins,
Secretary of Anglo-Bulgarian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal,
to the Bulgarian Minister at London

Anglo-Bulgarian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal

4 February 1927.

Dear Sir,

I write to inform you that, at the last meeting of this Tribunal, the President, after reviewing the work that had been done by the Tribunal, referred in particular to the work of Mr. Stoyan Petroff-Tchomakoff, the Bulgarian Agent. I enclose herewith a copy of the remarks made by the President and feel certain that you will be glad to have this tribute to Mr. Petroff's work on record.

I desire to add an expression of my own appreciation of Mr. Petroff's unceasing courtesy and his remarkable ability. As you are aware, the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine provided for the appointment of a British and a Bulgarian Secretary of the Tribunal but, in fact, I have acted as sole Sec-

retary throughout. My task would have been well nigh impossible but for the fact that I could always rely on Mr. Petroff's assistance.

I am, dear Sir, // Yours faithfully Claude Mullins // Secretary
 [address:] The Bulgarian Minister
 The Bulgarian Legation // 51, Queen's Gate, S.W.7

[enclosure:]

Extract from the minutes of the Anglo-Bulgarian
 Mixed Arbitral Tribunal of 28th January, 1927

The President of the Tribunal then spoke as follows:

...In congratulating itself upon the termination of its task, the Tribunal cannot fail to remember the valuable assistance which it has been so fortunate as to receive from the Government Agents. Owing to the circumstances already mentioned, most of the claims were against Bulgarian debtors. The Bulgarian Government Agent was very often requested to provide necessary information or to effect service on debtors, when the Secretariat of the Tribunal had been unable to effect service. Mr. Petroff-Tchomakoff has never hesitated to comply with these requests and to put the full result of his energies before the Tribunal.

Many cases could not have been proceeded with or could not have been dealt with in a proper way without the information supplied by him. He has earned before the Tribunal a reputation for straightforwardness and reliability...

Certified to be a true copy // Claude Mullins // Secretary

Letter from Mr. Heber Hart K[ing's] C[ounsel]

The British judge at the Anglo-Bulgarian mixed arbitral tribunal.

Dear Mr. Petroff-Tchomakoff,

In asking your kind acceptance of the accompanying wedding gift, may I take the opportunity of saying that I shall always remember with pleasure the work of the Anglo-Bulgarian Mixed Arbitral Tribunal in which we were both so largely concerned.

The conspicuous ability and zeal with which you invariably maintained the interests of your Government and fellow-nationals, while loyally and most amiably co-operating in the work of the Court, were constantly the object of my cordial admiration.

It is therefore in no merely formal way but with the heartiest goodwill that I earnestly wish you both domestic felicity and a long career of continued usefulness and distinction in the public service of your country.

Believing sincerely yours, HEBER HART K.C.

These acknowledgements were very complimentary to my father, considering that he had to plead the cases in a language foreign to him.

He spent a lot of his free time with the Stancioff's, none of them had much money so they found simple entertainments such as spending their Sundays in the Kew Gardens, amusing themselves with their conversations and good humour. As Ivan Stancioff relates in his book – *Diplomat and Gardener* – the two of them walked endlessly in the evenings discovering all the aspects of the great city. All this did not impede him to take an active part in his diplomatic life seeing many official and political people.

He became a close friend of Sir Edward Boyle, Chairman of the *Balkan Committee*, a non-government association which studied Balkan Affairs, and a great sustainer of the Bulgarian cause. They stayed in contact for many years keeping up a correspondence. Lady Grogan was another friend, an active student of East Europe. She wrote an excellent book on *The Life of J. D. Bourchier*, the *Times* Correspondent in the Balkans from 1888 onwards. He reported on all the Balkan Wars and was an unbiased sustainer of Bulgaria, had a great influence in the Balkans and fought for the principles of autonomy and self-determination of the Macedonians, as proclaimed by President Wilson.

J. D. Bourchier died in 1920 and was buried in the Rila Monastery.

In 1928 Stoyan met my mother – Lily de Poorter – at a dinner and it was practically love at first sight. She was the second daughter of Edward de Poorter, who had founded the *Hobson Company* producing an innovative version of the *Claudel* carburetor. His eldest daughter Violet had just married the son of the last Minister of Finance of the Russian Tsar – George de Bark – and had gone to Hungary to obtain a diploma in agronomy.

When my grand father heard that Lily wanted to marry a foreigner and, on top of it, a Bulgarian he was rather worried. So he went to the Bulgarian Minister Naumoff to get some information. The Minister said: *All I can say is, I wish he would marry my daughter.* When Stoyan went to ask for her hand and, being rather shy and nervous, he slightly coughed and scraped his throat, my grandfather immediately asked suspiciously: *what is this cough?*

The marriage took place at the Orthodox Church, as my mother had become orthodox believing she would end her days in Bulgaria and that it was natural to have children in the same religious faith of their father.

They had a very nice wedding reception at my mother's family house *Ambleside* in Wimbeldon, surrounded by a big garden and tennis courts.

After the house was sold, it became the emplacement where today the Wimbledon Tennis championships are held.

Her train bearers were Marie Weiser, daughter of Josepha and Felix Weiser, an important Austrian banker at whose house they had met, and George Galitzine.

They went to Venice for their honeymoon (on the last lap of their return to London they went hungry, as they had spent up to their last penny and could not afford the Wagon-restaurant).

In 1928 my father was transferred to Budapest to head the Legation as Chargé d'Affaires. They stayed for six years: my brother and I were born there. I believe these were very happy years, Europe was recovering from the consequences of the World War and entering into a more care-free period.

Hungarians, rather superficial but very likeable, friendly and hospitable enjoyed life thoroughly. Budapest was a merry, music-and-laughter loving town, when they were not thinking of the woes that had befallen their land.

There were balls given in the palaces that went on till the small hours, in unrepeatable luxury. Tzigane orchestras, their violins whispering softly, the Hungarian magnates in their hussar uniforms, for which they had a predilection, often danced the wild czardas or were carried away by the tempo of Viennese waltzes.

For my mother it was her first experience as a diplomat's wife. She learned very quickly and was always a great help to my father throughout his career, as she was a very tactful and warm hearted person. They were a well liked and very much invited couple, and gave a very positive image of Bulgarian Diplomats in all circumstances.

She told me of one episode: at her first official dinner given at home, attended by important personalities, she noticed as the first course was passed around, a fish covered in sauce which the guests tried to attack, but very quickly gave up. It turned out that the fish was raw because the cook had suddenly gone mad and they had to call the ambulance to take him to the nut-house. The dinner was spoiled but the guests enjoyed themselves in a more relaxed atmosphere.

My father had a great talent for drawing and, as it was known, he was asked to design the Bulgarian Church in Budapest, which was built and might still stand today.

In 1934 he was transferred to Washington as Chargé d'Affaires and in 1935 as Plenipotentiary Minister. There was a big Bulgarian Colony in the States, which kept him very busy. He did a lot to promote Bulgarian culture, and intensify Bulgarian relations. In the summer Washington was exceedingly hot and damp. He had to present his credentials to the President Roosevelt, and at the idea of having to put on his heavy Diplomatic

uniform he felt faint. So he dressed in the cool cellar, putting on the uniform next to his skin. When he arrived in the President's presence the latter was in an informal attire and said: *Mister Minister give me the letter, we both know its contents, so instead let us have a more interesting and constructive conversation.*

In 1936 he returned to Sofia provisionally as Chef de Protocol, and then as Political Director and Acting Secretary General. It was our first and only stay in Bulgaria. My personal memories are rather vague, as children we met all our cousins and got more acquainted with our aunts, and I got my first unconscious impressions of my homeland. I do remember, that opposite our flat, in *Tsar Osvoboditel*, there was a children's garden called the *Queen's Garden* where to my great joy, grownups could only enter if accompanied by their children. I often escaped there and had a wonderful time.

The winters were cold and freezing but very dry and lots of snow, so we moved in sleighs driven by horses. My mother and her friends went skating in the *Boris park*, it was one of the social events, The Bulgarians are very hospitable, so the Diplomats got to know the society very well and shared many entertainments such as tennis tournaments, driving around the country, although the roads were ruinous for the cars. All the diplomats who had been in Sofia kept very fond memories of the country, as I found out when I casually met them later on in life.

From 1938 till 1940 we were in Sweden. I recollect long dark winter days, leaving for school in the cold dark mornings and returning in the same conditions; during the summers on the contrary the day light lasted a long time. My parents took us along on week-ends, driving through various parts of Sweden. To tell the truth, we were more attracted by our comic books than by the sights, but I remember the vast lakes and interminable forests. On all these short trips my father used to delight us with his story telling, some were old Bulgarian folk tales others where pure imagination, but they were mostly about animals.

War was declared while we were in Stockholm, but being a child I was not impressed, on the contrary found the idea very exciting. Little did I know how very much all our lives would be affected and that the World order would be so completely changed and the balance of power reversed in favour of America?

Early 1940 we arrived in Bucarest, where my father had been appointed.

#

II. **Bucarest** was an important post for my father. It coincided (1940) with the first negotiations regarding the return of southern Dobrudja to Bulgaria. The Ministry estimated that my father was the right person to head the preparatory negotiations, as the Rumanians had accepted the idea of a territorial revision. We, the children, were very excited when a special train was sent to Sofia to fetch us, the wagon was outfitted with a private drawing room, bedrooms and a bath room, we immediately insisted on having a bath (I don't believe our wishes were granted).

The Dobrudja question was settled with success in 1940.

On the third of October he received the order of Commander of the Bulgarian Order of Civil Merit accompanied by a personal letter from the Foreign Affairs in the name of the King congratulating him on the outcome of the Craiova agreement (signed on September 7th) ... and for the dedication and ability with which he had conducted the negotiations before and during the agreement ...

Many important events took place in Bucharest, of which many are related in my father's book *The Spirit of Diplomacy*.

I know he warned the government of the imminent attack of Germany on Russia, but his reports were ignored and considered defeatist. He went personally to Sofia to warn the Prime Minister Filoff and The Minister of Foreign Affairs Popoff. Three weeks later, Germany launched the attack on June 22, 1941 (Operation Barbarossa). This put Bulgaria in a very difficult political position.

Germany pressured the Government into signing the Tripartite Pact (1st of March 1941): without entering the war, but conceding the passage of German troops to Greece, and yet, at the same time, keeping diplomatic relations with the Soviets. Later Bulgaria was obliged to declare war on America, as it was stipulated that the signatories were held to give full assistance to any other member who became victim of an aggression (in response to the attack on Pearl Harbour, America had declared war on Japan). So Bulgaria found herself obliged to declare war on America and their ally England. They hoped that since they were so far away and no Bulgarian troops would be entailed fighting or taking active part in the war, it would be considered a mere symbolic act. It did not turn out that way at all, Sofia was heavily bombed and the consequences at the end of the war were very heavy for Bulgaria.

He related that in July 1943 he had had an interview with the Rumanian vice Premier Mihai Antonescu who proposed that we enter into a direct understanding in order to discuss options and measures to be taken,

to preserve the interests of both countries and the eventual way out of the German alliance. Mr. Antonescu asked him to send a very confidential report, considering the delicacy of the situation. This was done, but obviously Filoff showed the report to the Germans.

In fact my father could not understand why M. Antonescu treated him so coldly at their following meeting until the matter was cleared up. As a direct consequence my father was transferred in 1944 to Tokio, where he was sent to be out of the way.

During the first years of the war, as far as I remember, life in Bucarest for us children was pleasant enough and we led a normal life. Except for lemons and bananas, there was no food shortage, we attended school with regularity. Once when the car was sent to pick me up at school I did not behave as I should have, I piled all my noisy little friends into the car, overriding the chauffeur's protests, it became a very unruly expedition, the national flag was well in sight, and it gave a very bad impression. As a result my father decided that from there on, I could ride home on a bicycle.

There was a nice swimming pool at the residence and often friends of my parents were invited to refresh themselves during the summer heat, but my brother had an important mission, saving the life of ants who adventured themselves on the border of the pool, and if inadvertently someone trod on a miserable ant he was ruthlessly pushed into the water, and quickly cooled. The only salvation was an anguished chorus calling, our governess Lola for help, the only authority he recognized. In the winter he used to build himself an igloo insisting to spend the night as a real Eskimo, but the freezing weather got the better of him.

We lived through the big earthquake (1942), which frightened us for a long time: many buildings had collapsed and our residence was damaged and aftershock tremors were often felt. Many years later (1976), when I accompanied my husband who participated in the 20th World Petroleum Congress in Bucarest, a lot of memories came back to me and, amongst other, the great fright during the earthquake was specially vivid. I also showed my husband the Residence from outside: in that precise moment the actual Ambassador was returning home. I accosted him and introduced myself as the daughter of the Minister Petroff-Tchomakoff who had chosen this Residence for the Bulgarian government, where I had past part of my childhood. I expected him to invite us at least into the garden, but he grunted a bearly audible *Oh yes* and walked on. To tell the truth, the chauffeur was embarrassed and tried to say a few words.

My parents led the usual diplomatic life, during the summer we were usually sent to Sinaia to be out of the heat. We had lots of friends, all youngsters, having a wonderful time, excursions in the Carpathians, sleeping in mountain huts, brewing our tea on open fires: the result was that the tea had a very smoky taste, in our opinion delicious. The greatest excitement was galloping on little ponies through the streets of Sinaia till they were exhausted, after that no body would rent us any ponies. Once I caught my brother sitting at a street corner trying to sell without success, but to my great shame, some miserable flowers he had gathered in a nearby field.

I often used to sit in my father's study playing Damas or Halma, but what I enjoyed most was listening to his reminiscence of the wars he had taken part in, and he had taken part in all of them as a cavalry Lieutenant and later as Captain in the Royal Guards: the battles of Andrinople, Dede Agatch, Tchataldja (1912-1913); in 1915-1918 Kossovo Pole, Prishtina, and into Albania following the retreat of the routed Serbian Army; then to defend Dobrudja.

I remember one episode: During the Great World War, he was out on patrol, and his unit ran into a Russian unit, it was very difficult to distinguish them from the Bulgarians as they had the same uniform. The difference was in the cocarde on their caps, (a rampant lion or a bicephale eagle). But when they came near enough to recognize each other the soldiers started to fraternize, and did not want to fight to the great embarrassment of their commanding officers. They finally managed to re-group their units and decided to part ways. But for a long time the Russians followed them at a distance, trotting when they trotted, galloped when they galloped, causing a certain unease, but finally they gave up to my father's great relief.

Another time they were in an Albanian village and the chief of the village invited him into his house and offered him full hospitality including a visit to his harem. He encountered great difficulty in refusing this generous offer but was adamant after he had had a glimpse of the most horrible hags. Apparently when leaving your host's house it was wise to move out backwards, in order to avoid receiving a bullet in the back, once you left the protection of his hospitable hovel.

I have the feeling that, this period of his young life, in spite of the hardships, sufferings and tragedies remained a stimulating adventure; there remained an aura of heroic actions, patriotism, nostalgia, companionship, sharing experiences and pride for his country and its beauty which was never lost on him.

Another episode in Rumania my parents related: They had been in the country visiting some friends near Ploesti when all of a sudden they were

in the middle of an air fight and one of the American fighters had crashed into a field. By miracle the pilot was unhurt, slightly dazed and surrounded by furious peasants insulting him and dragging him, ready to lynch him. My parents stopped the car, my mother stepped out and addressed the pilot in English, asking him where they had come from? The pilot was so flabbergasted that he answered: *From Benghazi*. My parents persuaded the peasants to take him to the police or other authorities.

By 1943 the atmosphere changed, people began to worry as the Russian army advanced towards Rumania. Some thought that the communists probably were not as ferocious as in the beginning; others were very afraid, and not convinced, one of these was my mother who had no illusions.

People were trying to leave, especially the Jews, whose situation had become very precarious. I began to notice the absence of some of my acquaintance and wondered where they were. My father granted visas to many of them helping them to leave. He even granted one to the French Minister Jacques Truelle who invoked the necessity of thermal cures for his leg, although both of them knew that he was trying to join General de Gaulle, which he did.

As I mentioned before, my father was transferred to Tokio as he was no longer considered to be in line with Bogdan Filoff's pro-German policy. And Tokio was well out of the way.

In January 1944 we left for Switzerland with all our belongings, and indeed we were lucky, as it was one of the last lift-vans to get through Germany and Austria. We were all sad to leave after four years, abandoning our unhappy friends to their fate as Bucarest had started to be bombarded and the Russian Front was rapidly advancing. We children in particular felt very badly as we could not take our governess and pets with us. My father had considered resigning, but he had scruples, he finally decided that he had to do his duty and go to Japan otherwise he would be considered a deserter and would probably be mobilized.

My mother said it was impossible to undertake such a difficult voyage with young children, all through Russia, in the Trans Siberian under such precarious conditions, it would take at least a month. The risk of being torpedoed in crossing the sea was great, and Tokio was being bombarded. So it was decided that we would remain in Fribourg were our friends, the Stancioffs, already were installed and where my father could wait for his Russian visa. When it arrived (the 13th of March) he left for Japan.

We were all very upset because of this forced separation, the first one in our life and under such uncertain circumstances, and for how long? He had to take provisions for the whole voyage as it was doubtful they would find anything on the way once they entered the U.R.S.S. We accompanied him to the station in Fribourg. I was holding his lunch and in the emotion of the departure, the train left with me still holding it in my hands. As he was travelling with the Suisse Minister de Weck who was returning to Bucarest, we thought that he would be taken care of.

He arrived in Sofia under a heavy bombardment, an incendiary bomb had fallen on our apartment and all our past was burned. It was total chaos, no water, no electricity, he had difficulty finding the regents, getting all the necessary documents, and eventual instructions. His friends the Peevs put him up in Kniajevo, in their charming home. He finally managed to leave on April the 25th and arrived after a month and a half to Tokio. The long journey to Japan is a significant part of the personal memories he committed to his book, *The Spirit of Diplomacy*.

At first he was rather lonely in such a different environment and it was not easy to establish social contacts with the Japanese, but with time he learned to appreciate their art, their courteous manners and sobriety. He confined himself to being an observer of the great Pacific drama and used whatever influence he had in trying to alleviate the lot of the Allied, in particular, the American prisoners-of-war. In November Bulgaria broke off its diplomatic relations with Japan.

Meanwhile my mother remained in the Hotel Suisse in Fribourg, it was populated by an assortment of people unable to return to their country or having fled from it. Belgians, Italians, French, Dutch, Americans, Hungarians, Bulgarians and French Jews. Besides Swiss and English. This little world got on pretty well on the whole, they played bridge and discussed the future, following all the events with trepidation and anxiety.

The only problem was the heating – during the winter my mother's room was only 10 °C – with very short periods of hot water, that is the only way Switzerland felt the discomforts of war and, of course, food rationing. But, as my mother wrote in her diary as *the train drew into the station*, we read the name *Buchs* with a feeling of joy, knowing that we had arrived in this little country that, for four years, had been spared the horrors of war, an island of bliss amidst a tormented Europe.

Before leaving Bucarest my parents had been able to sell their car at a good price, which helped us to live off it for quite a while. My brother Wladimir was put in a college St. Jean, a nice situation on the edge of a

forest. When the moment came for the parting he wrung his hands and shed a tear or two, he seemed very crestfallen, but my mother thought, as the Stancioff boys where also there he would soon cheer up. Instead he escaped a few times and obviously was not very happy. He had wanted to go to the German School as in Bucarest, but my mother did not want him to turn into a Nazi so he had to stay there.

I was put in a convent of Dominican nuns, rather cheerful and reasonably modern. All the same I was not cut out for discipline, religion or obedience, so for most of the weekends my marks of good conduct where not high enough. I was not allowed to join my mother at the Hotel Suisse.

Meanwhile the Allies were advancing, the Atlantic wall had given way. But on the other front news were disquieting. Sofia, Bucarest, Budapest were heavily bombed, Russia invaded Bessarabia and Bucovina, in August 1944 Rumania capitulated. The Russians were marching in, the soldiers pillaging and smashing shop windows. Certainly the Anglo-Americans had charming Allies.

Next on the list was Bulgaria. On the 5th of September Russia declared war and the Red Army entered the country. The terror started. For four days the communists were waving their flags, stopping people in the streets, entering houses, but Moscow did not want a revolution. It was clear that they were installing themselves in the Balkans. Many people were arrested, including the Regents. In September Bulgaria broke off the relations with Hungary, we were worried about my aunts, Sir George Rendel tried to find my aunt Hélène's address in order to assist and protect her.

The Regents (one of them was Prince Cyril, King Boris's brother) will be condemned to death by the People's Tribunal and shot on the rim of a bomb crater (1945), which served as their common grave in a remote corner of Sofia's cemetery. With them were executed many Cabinet Ministers, friends of the late King Boris, members of his chancery and so many others.

Meanwhile in Switzerland we led a very privileged life, we were spared all the horrors of war, and we youngsters were not really aware of all the future implications of life. My mother decided to move to Geneva. We changed schools and were much happier. My mother rented a flat, sharing it with Mrs. Anna Radeff (born Guechoff, a cousin of ours) and her son Ivan Radeff who had resigned from the diplomatic service in May. The daughters of Ilia and Marika Belinoff (Minister in Bratislava) also stayed in the flat, their parents were still in Bratislava and had difficulties with the American authorities.

The flat became a gathering point for all the Bulgarians we knew. Stefan Grueff, to whom my mother gave English lessons, had the misfortune to hear on the radio his fathers death sentence emitted by the People's tribunal as well as those of the Regents. He became correspondent to *Paris Match* and later on published *The Crown of Thorns*. He also became involved with Bulgarian exiled politicians. The Takvorians, Sava Panitza, Harry Panitza married to Bertrand Che-nevière, Annie Tchaprachikoff who also entered *Paris Match*, Tania Daneva, Evgenie Silianoff, Svetlo Radeff, another diplomat who escaped from Berlin, and many other friends lived in Geneva. But in 1944 nobody knew what the future had in store for them, the situation in Bulgaria was becoming problematic and we feared that Bulgaria, willing or not, would enter the Soviet orbit. For us it would mean permanent exile and a status of refugee.

In Switzerland you had to have some money, otherwise you were interned in the refugee camp, the alternative being to take a job as domestics. So some of my parents' Hungarian friends came as cooks or butlers: while they waited for their emigration papers to Canada, they all cooked together and afterwards played bridge. In the summer and winter holidays we stayed in the mountains, guests of a friend of my mother, who had a chalet. We took long bicycle excursions from one valley to another, not very tiring as we bicycled downhill and took the small trains up to the next mountain, we had tennis lessons, in winter we learned to ski and skate.

My mother felt sorry for Bulgarian friends and relatives such as Alexandra and Annie Belinoff, so she took them along with us on some holidays and helped with their schooling.

As in November 1944 Bulgaria broke off relations with Japan, my father started to organize his return with all the staff and some other co-nationals, the first formal step being the request for visas to transit through Soviet Union. My mother sent him a telegram advising him to stop in Ankara, because she had been told that the Civil War had started in Greece and Diplomats were being dismissed in Bulgaria.

Finally the requested Russian visa arrived and they started their return voyage from Japan on the 8th of January 1945, and at last they arrived in Ankara rather travel worn, on the 26th of February.

As soon as he was in Ankara my father, marveled at the efficiency of the American Secret Service who had kept track of his movements, immediately received a request from the American Ambassador, Mr. Steinhardt, who wished to see him. The Ambassador questioned him on conditions in Japan, he told him what he knew, which was not much more than what the Ambassador already knew.

He then took the decisive step of severing his relations with the new regime in Bulgaria. The British Ambassador in Ankara – Sir Maurice Peterson, an old friend from the time in Sofia – was very hospitable and helped my father to obtain the Suisse and French visas. It was difficult to obtain a passage to France, as war conditions still prevailed in the Mediterranean. Finally after a three months' wait in Istanbul he was able, through the intervention of a Turkish ex-colleague to obtain a passage on a Turkish cargo boat, sailing to Toulon towards the end of June.

The S.S. *Odemish* was laden with nuts, figs and raisins. There was also a cow on the poop! After a six day voyage he arrived in Toulon where he managed with great difficulty to hire an ambulance. They drove through France stopping here and there to buy gasoline from happy peasants who had drilled holes in the pipeline built by the Americans for the needs of the invasion army. They drove through the Haute Savoie without having unpleasant interference from the *résistants*, thanks to the Red Cross emblems and occasional squeals from the siren.

He finally arrived in Geneva on the 2nd of July 1945, after six month of traveling and waiting. We were overjoyed!

At this time decisions had to be taken, what to do? The situation had radically changed: no more salary, my father had to turn in his passport; after that, he was deprived of his nationality and his possessions confiscated. The situation in Europe was very instable, the American–Russian relations were becoming strained, so my parents applied for American emigration papers. My mother had been able to recuperate her British nationality, as for the rest of us, we obtained *des titres de voyage*. Time passed, we continued our studies, I was at the *Ecole Internationale*, there were students of all nationalities, and I made lasting friendships. We visited my grand parents in Brussels, my grand father was worried that we might settle there at his expense, so he greatly encouraged my father to emigrate, he gave a lot of advice but no substantial help.

By 1949 my parents decided to leave for Argentine, as it was not possible to continue living in Switzerland. My father left ahead of us to find an apartment and investigate the possibilities of work. As we were about to leave, my mother had to have an operation and serious complications followed, but luckily everything turned out well. So in 1950 we embarked on a cargo boat leaving from Gotteborg; it took us about three weeks to arrive in Buenos Aires. I put on a lot of weight as I did not want to miss a single meal and especially the irresistible Smoergos board.

Stopping in Rio de Janeiro we met Christo Boyadjieff who had served under my father in Bucarest and had started the *Bulgarian Review* and

Foyer Bulgare. My father, a good patriot, was very interested in Bulgarian affairs and had already accepted to collaborate with the organization of the *Free Bulgarians* (founded in 1949 in Paris by Dantcho Peyev) and the review *Vazrazhdane*. Highly respected personalities gave their support, such as former ministers-plenipotentiary Sava Kiroff, N.P. Nikolaev, and younger diplomats (Evgeni Silianoff, Christo Schischmanoff, Ivan Stancioff, Ivan Radeff, etc.) gave much weight to these activities. My father collaborated actively with the initiatives of Christo Boyadjieff as well as other *Free Bulgarians* such as Louly Brisby, the Stancioffs. His closest collaborators in South America, were colleagues of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Panayot Panayotoff and Boubi Racho-Petroff. So my father gave valuable advice, wrote articles, used his respected name and many contacts, and added considerable prestige to these and other Bulgarian anti-Communist initiatives in exile. And, of course, he was very close to the Royal family.

When we arrived in Buenos Aires, my father was overjoyed to have his family with him again. At the start we were rather depressed, having had to leave everything behind, to find ourselves in a completely new and very different continent, and for how long? Europe was so far away, personally I missed all my school friends, and the summers were unbearably hot and humid, no question of summer holidays. We quickly adapted ourselves to this new life. We had a roof over our head. Buenos Aires was full of refugees from East Europe, not to mention Italians and Germans who were there for reasons best known to themselves. Life was cheap and the Argentines turned out to be very hospitable and helpful.

My brother finished his studies at the American School, he was always very adventurous, so one day he decided to cross Argentine, arrived in Bariloche, there with some friends bought a horse and went into Chile, but at a certain place was robbed of everything by some maté smugglers. He finally reappeared one day with only a sombrero. My parents thought that he would have more of a future in America, so with a great sacrifice they sent him to university where he started to study geology, but shortly after that he again was attracted by a more adventurous aspect of life and enrolled in the Marine Corps. He was sent to Korea just at the end of the war and only later finished his studies; did many different jobs, married a Mexican girl (Rose Cota) in California. They had a daughter (Stoyana) and a few years later divorced.

My father tried to do some business through his European connections, but he was not used to the way this was conducted in Argentine like

passing money under the table, promises not withheld, so he soon gave up. He dedicated himself to writing – it is here that he started his book *The Spirit of Diplomacy* – and painting.

He had a significant talent for painting, and he received quite a lot of orders. (I have a letter from H.M. the Queen Giovanna on return from her first visit to Bulgaria in 1994: *J'ai retrouvé en rentrant les trois peintures de ton père qui m'ont suivis partout...*). He kept up his collaboration with the *Free Bulgarians*. He had applied for a post in the secretariat of the United Nations, basing his request on his knowledge and experience in Balkan Affairs. But the answer was that it was the policy of the Secretariat to accept only candidates who had been recommended by their respective governments, which was clearly impossible.

I had started to work, first in a shop selling bags and accessories, which did not last long as I really found it very uninteresting and was often late. The owner found that I was not the right person for the job, but would I have dinner with him instead. I then found a job in the first Modern Art gallery in B.A. belonging to an Argentine friend of mine. This was much more to my taste, as I was much more in contact with interesting people. But since I still wanted to be independent, I had always been attracted by jewelry design, more specifically costume jewellery, which I found very flattering for women. I had a necklace from Paris which had been given to me; looking around I found the necessary material to copy it.

I went in to a top boutique to offer my creation. It took me about ten minutes of walking up and down before I gathered the courage to enter, the success was immediate, they ordered a dozen, so that is how my career as jewellery designer started. Had they said *no* I would have left it at that.

So with a friend of mine, Maja Kinsky, I developed this little business with great success: we got orders from various shops, I also enrolled my mother to help. My idea was to save enough for a trip to Europe, which happened and I was able to bring back a lot of new material for our creations. As my father said at one point, I was the only one earning some money.

When we finally returned to Europe, I continued this line of work till 1990, having as clients many *couturiers* (Balmain, Valentino, Nina Ricci etc.). I exported all over Europe, had shows in America and wherever I went I was asked to bring my jewels with me.

I settled in Rome and my task was made easier as the Italians are excellent artisans. I had made quite a name for myself, and until today there are people wearing my creations, even after twenty years.

I still get requests and have been asked to start again, but every thing has its time, other events were forced onto me, so it was time to give up. I had married a University Professor – Ugo Bilardo – and that was a full time job!

#

III. This reminds me that in 1975 I wanted to show my country to my husband. At that time my parents had died, so it was less of a risk to visit Bulgaria. I had an Italian passport and had obtained an entry visa and, more important, an exit visa.

So returning from our summer holiday in Greece, we decided to drive through Bulgaria. I was very excited by the idea, but made the mistake to speak Bulgarian at the frontier and this immediately aroused some suspicions with the frontier officials. We were worrying more and more and had to wait a long time before recuperating our passports, meanwhile they had been enquiring about me in Sofia.

Finally they let us go and we drove through the beautiful countryside.

Arriving in Sofia, we had the impression of a grey and derelict town, not much life, no private shops or restaurants. We managed to find my cousins, Marianne Kefsivova and her mother Oltinka. They did not want to go out to dinner with us, as they thought it was not prudent to be seen with foreigners. So we had dinner at their apartment and, speaking freely, they gradually relaxed and even told us the jokes that were circulating. I was just telling them that, without thinking, I had among my luggage Solgenit-sin's book (*Archipel Gulag*): they got a fright saying that if it was found, I risked going to prison.

At that moment a couple walked in and my cousin made me a sign not to talk. This couple had been imposed on them for the last twenty years, occupants of the best room and leaving them no privacy. They belonged to the privileged *party people* and, as such, they deserved to share an apartment with the *bourgeois*, eventually to spy on them: that was the rule in those days.

We visited Plovdiv and saw the old family house, which was at that time used as the public library. At the hotel restaurant, they seated us with a couple who, in the beginning, was rather hostile but, after a few bottles of wine, we fraternized. The husband had studied in Russia and was part of the Nomenklatura, I told him who I was and, when we parted, he told me to be sure to send a postcard to his wife telling her how wonderful I had found everything; coming from a bourgeois abroad, it had a certain effect I suppose!

I dragged my poor husband, who did not like mountain excursions, up the Vitosha; he couldn't escape but he enjoyed it and was pleased to have

made me happy. I spoke to some solitary excursionists who said that I was lucky to live in the West and that Bulgaria was a tormented nation. The last thing we did was to look for some authentic yoghurt: being summer, it was not easy to find and we had to drive quite a way to a village. When I was back in Rome, I managed to produce it for a few months using the peculiar earthenware bought from the shepherd in the village.

I was pleased to show my country to Ugo. How different everything is today!

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IV. In 1956 my grandfather – Edward de Poorter – died in Brussels, leaving an estate to his three daughters. This enabled my parents to return to Europe and namely Brussels, because my mother's sisters now lived there, and Belgium was a quiet country not prone to political upheavals.

At that time, my father's sisters were respectively in Paris and Madrid. I will dedicate them a Chapter further on.

My parents rented a very nice apartment facing the *bois de la Cambre*, where they used to take long walks around the small lakes. They often took trips with their great friends André Motte (former Belgian Ambassador) and his wife Nussia, daughter of the late Prime Minister Malinoff.

They lived surrounded by family, new friends and friends of the past. My father continued to paint, and in May 1964 he held an extremely successful Exhibition at the *Rubens Gallery*. His paintings of birds and flowers on gold panels, inspired by the Japanese style, were well accepted. Critical reaction was favourable. His success was such that almost all the paintings were sold.

Some time later, the *Bulgarian Review*, published in Rio de Janeiro, quoted some comments of the Belgian press related to his exhibition: ... *La Libre Belgique* drew attention to the fidelity and variety of his observations of birds and to the balance in his composition asserted by the greenery, the few flowers or the single branch in the oriental manner. The line is pure and skillful it said, an opinion repeated in *L'Eventail* which calls him an artist who founds his technique on the value of draughtsmanship. In the same Magazine Pierre Poirier of the Royal Academy suggests that these works could relieve the cold of today's mandarins' apartment walls. He continues, A Fujita, prince of drawing, has become Parisian. It is rarer to see a Westerner, a Bulgarian putting himself on the roads of the spirits which open the intelligence of nature interpreted

by a vision at once aesthetic and pleasant to the eye. The false abstractionists have shown themselves incapable of painting mists in the Chinese manner. Petroff-Tchomakoff takes off from concrete matter to rise into the absolute. The secret of this master birdman is that he loves his models.

He continued to write and collaborate with the *Bulgarian Review* and *Svoboda*. He was a man of simple tastes, money and luxury had no attraction for him. I remember my mother told me he used to give her his salary to dispose of it in the way she found fit. Very sensitive to nature, his only hobby was collecting stamps, of which he had some very rare examples as well as a very complete collection of Bulgarian ones, going back to the very first samples. With a bit of regret, convinced by my mother, he sold a part in order to buy a car.

It was sad that he did not live to see the liberation of his beloved Bulgaria.

He died on August 26th, 1966 deeply regretted by everyone. His coffin was carried out of the church, accompanied by the choir singing *Kol slaven...*

My mother died four years later. They had formed a happy couple and had been an example for us: they taught us loyalty, the importance of honesty and straightforwardness, and to take events in our stride without complaining. They gave us a feeling of security, a cultural background and, most of all, an education. At home conversations were always interesting and instructive, it was rare to hear gossip.

Because of this I was rather guileless, not really prepared to deal with the cynical, sarcastic and devious approach of some people: I often was gullible and I paid for it. I sometimes have the strange feeling that my family is around me and the more I think of them the more real they become.

The last descendent of the Petroff-Tchomakoff family is my niece Stoyana who, unfortunately, has no ties or interest for Bulgaria. On the other hand, she was born and lives in the United States of America and has grown up American.

I believe that the best way to conclude is to add the written testimonies of my father's friends and of people who knew him (Christo Boyadjiess, Ambassador André Motte and an article in *Svoboda*).

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V. Excerpts.

THE LOSS OF A FRIEND¹

A deep friendship linked me with Stoyan Petroff-Tchomakoff that began during the years 1940-1943, which we spent together in Bucharest. He was the Bulgarian minister, I – his secretary. As soon as I arrived I felt a different atmosphere in the legation – one of ease, of freedom of action. Correct in the extreme, Petroff's attitude to us was that of a friend and not of a superior. Whenever one of his secretaries managed to obtain an important item of political information, Petroff did not take the opportunity of making a personal report to the Ministry, but always sent it signed by the secretary in question. In this way he gave us all a free field of activity. With his paternal feelings towards us, it was with sincere gratification and pleasure that he followed our success. Whenever he visited one of the Rumanian ministers, even the President, Mihail Antonesco, he would take one of his secretaries with him.

Petroff always held that the Bulgarian cause should be defended by all means possible. Before being posted to Bucharest, I used to work in the ciphering section of the Ministry. And we (all of us in this section) used to crowd round to read with admiration the telegrams and reports he sent about his meetings with Rumanian Foreign Minister, Manoilescu, with whom he was discussing the thorny problem of restoration of South Dobroudja. In these telegrams, written in a clear and brilliant style, we found the intelligent replies given by Petroff full of dignity and humour.

After the Russian occupation of Bulgaria and the Communist usurpation of power, we both found ourselves in exile. Here too Petroff showed the same qualities of an honest patriot. Without the least hesitation he accepted the idea of founding the *Foyer Bulgare*, and became a faithful and valued collaborator from the first number onwards. In this issue he published an article signed *Observer — Brussels*, which outlined our future policy in general terms. He said, among other things, in it:

Let us gather and preserve all that reminds us of our country and build up a precious treasure which we will hand down to posterity so that they could await with pride and confidence the bright day when on the tortured face of our Holy Mother, Bulgaria will no longer run tears of pain but tears of joy and exultation before the wonderful sight of resurrected liberty.

¹ Bulgarian Review, December 1966.

In 1963 he held an exhibition of his paintings, in Brussels. They were pictures of birds, painted in an individual style, and were a great success. I well remember his letter informing me of this success – and in which he told me that he was sending part of the proceeds of his sales for the benefit of the magazine.

The life of Petroff stands out as that of an accomplished man, of an impeccable gentleman, disciplined, correct and human, but above all patriot. He did not have the chance to see his country free, but he showed us how to serve it.

Christo Boyadjieff

In memoriam

STOYAN PETROFF-TCHOMAKOFF¹

Né à Plovdiv en 1889, il est mort à Bruxelles le 26 Août 1966.

Fils de Vladimir Pettroff-Tchomakoff, Colonel d'Artillerie et de Marie Pettroff-Tchomakoff, qui pendant 25 ans fût Dame d'Honneur, d'abord de la Princesse Marie-Louise de Bourbon-Parme, première épouse du Prince et ensuite Roi Ferdinand de Bulgarie, et de la Reine Eléonore, seconde épouse du Roi Ferdinand.

Après avoir fait ses études au Lycée Henry IV, il suivit les cours de droit à l'Université de Paris où il obtint le diplôme de Bachelier-ès-Lettres et de licencié en Droit.

C'est en 1911 qu'il entra dans le service diplomatique bulgare. En tant qu'officier de Cavalerie il prit part aux guerres dans les Balkans où sa conduite lui mérita plusieurs distinctions honorifiques. Envoyé à Londres en 1921 en qualité de Premier Secrétaire, il fût dans la suite promu sur place au grade de Conseiller. La Légation de Bulgarie faisant à cette époque office également d'Agence de la Cour Arbitral Mixte Anglo-Bulgare, la défense des intérêts nationaux devant cette juridiction fût confié à Stoyan Pettroff-Tchomakoff qui plaida en anglais plus de mille causes. Grâce à sa brillante intervention la Cour jugea favorablement la plupart des cas des nationaux bulgare.

Il contracta mariage en 1927 avec Mlle Lilly de Poorter.

Cette même année il fût nommé chargé d'affaires en titre de la Légation de Bulgarie à Budapest, poste qu'il occupa jusqu'en 1933, pour se voir ensuite envoyé en qualité de Ministre à Washington où il demeura jusqu'en 1936. Rappelé à cette époque au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères à Sofia il y cumula les fonctions de Directeur Politique et de Secrétaire Général. Nommé Ministre à Stockholm en 1938 il demeura à ce

¹ Bulgarian Review, December 1966.

poste jusqu'en son transfert en 1940 à la Légation de Bulgarie à Bucharest qu'il quitta en 1944, pour rejoindre, en la même qualité la Légation à Tokio. Cette même année la rupture des relations entre le Japon et la Bulgarie mit fin à sa mission. La tournure des évènements politiques survenue en Bulgarie le déterminèrent à remettre sa démission. Les sympathies connues de Stoyan Pettroff-Tchomakoff pour la cause des Alliés Occidentaux ne furent pas étrangères à son transfert, de caractère punitif de Bucharest à Tokio. On se souviendra que deux de ses soeurs qui étaient Dames d'Honneur de la Reine Yoanna de Bulgarie se virent pour une raison identique exilées de Bulgarie.

A[ndré] M[otte]

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VI. My Aunts. I did not really know my aunts, Hélène, Marie and Sonia, as I had lived for a very short time in Sofia.

Sonia was born in 1885. She was very different from her sisters: discreet, retiring introvert personality, a strict observant orthodox, she used to fast for 40 days before Easter. I believe that she was over shadowed by her two brilliant sisters who were at court, had a leading part in the social life of Sofia and traveled a lot (which Sonia did not like). She took care of the household and looked after Marie's adored and rather ugly dogs during her absence, she looked severe and was not open to many friendships out of shyness as she was very reserved.

It was very difficult for my father to get her to agree to evacuate to Svishtov during the bombardments in Sofia and, before leaving for Japan in 1944, he went personally to persuade her to join her sisters in Budapest, where they had been exiled. When they were forcefully repatriated by the Russians, she was the only one pleased to be back in Sofia.

She lived all through the Communist rule by giving French lessons and receiving when possible some help from us. She did not even dare go the Dutch Legation, who were friends of ours and received money for her. So we sent her parcels, trying also to meet some very odd requests made by her pupils, e.g. for a motorcycle outfit and a trombone for which they paid her: my father said that the requests had to be more reasonable in the future.

She died in 1963 and I still have not been able to find her grave.

Hélène, the first-born in 1882, became lady in waiting to princess Eudoxie in 1914. They were friends since their childhood and through the years this friendship was never broken.

In 1930 she went with the other dignitaries to Assisi to assist at the marriage of King Boris and Princess Giovanna of Savoia: she met the fu-

ture Queen of Bulgaria for the first time. In the procession of cars going to the cathedral she was escorted by Mussolini.

In Sofia she was appointed Chief lady in waiting to Her Majesty, who became very attached to her. My aunt accompanied the Queen to all public functions and traveled with her. In her *memoires* Queen Giovanna says that, when she arrived in Bulgaria, she had two ladies in waiting; *My well-beloved and faithful Miss Hélène Petroff-Tchomakoff and my dear Miss Theodora Stancioff* (who remained in this post a few years). Meanwhile my aunt Marie had also been called to court; being the youngest, she was nicknamed *Bébé*.

They had their own apartment in Sofia and invited a lot. When King Boris wanted to meet diplomats or other members of the society unofficially, he would ask them to organize a dinner party, he would have a gramophone brought, and there would be dancing; it usually turned out to be a very successful evening.

Philippe Jullian mentions in his book (1958), in the part regarding the social life in the Balkans: *Les centres mondains de Sophia étaient l'Union Club et le salon des demoiselles Petroff, dames d'honneur de la reine*. Life in the thirties in Sofia was very pleasant, it was a small and hospitable society and lots of things were going on. People took pleasure in simple entertainments, such as picnics, fancy dress parties, excursions to the Rila Monastery and Tchamkoria.

The Royal family often spent time at the Palace of Euxinograd, near Varna (on the Black Sea), where the Royal yacht made outings along the coast, according to the descriptions of my aunts.

I myself, during one of our visits from Bucarest in the early forties, was taken to Vrana to meet the Royal children. While playing, two shapes covered in white sheets crept into the room: we were supposed to be frightened by the two ghosts, instead we burst out laughing as *the ghosts* turned out to be the Queen and my aunt Marie.

The atmosphere was not formal, on the contrary, although formal and international recognitions were not missing for the way the Miss Petroff-Tchomakoffs had absolved their functions. In 1937 Hélène had been decorated with *La croix d'Officier de la Légion d'Honneur*.

But with the advent of war things changed, people were divided in pro-German feelings and fear of Russia. Germany seemed to be the only guaranty, because not only were Bulgaria's territorial claims sustained, but also she was the main commercial partner. The Allies were slow in deciding and failed to bring about any effective co-operation between Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey for the maintenance of their neutrality and,

furthermore, the virtual Russo-German alliance enabled the pro-Russian majority to accept a pro-German policy*.

My aunts were decidedly and openly pro-British and continued to invite all the Allied Diplomats as their friends. This created several problems.

The day the Tripartite pact was signed – wrote down in his diary the then Bulgarian Prime Minister Bogdan Filoff – the Petroff-Tchomakoff's gave a tea party for Sir George Rendel, the Belgian Minister André Motte and the Netherlands Minister de Brau.

Four days later (March the 4th 1941), Filoff told the King that the two sisters had to be dismissed, as they exposed the court and would create problems with the Germans. The King said that under no circumstances would the Queen dismiss them, especially Hélène.

March the 5th the Prime Minister returned to the subject recommending and insisting on their dismissal, saying that it was better to do it before the Germans forced them. The King finally agreed but was very much broken up about it and almost shed tears.

King Boris had yielded to pressure of circumstances and to his pro-German Prime Minister Bogdan Filoff, and so dismissed Queen Giovanna's loyal but pro-British lady in waiting Hélène after over twenty five years' service at Court. Her sister Marie had to go too. This in a way saved Hélène's life. Of the group loyal to the Royal Family, as the Queen quotes *the only one who was spared from the tragedies and executions of the Communist Rule was my dear Hélène Petroff-Tchomakoff.*

They left for Budapest, on the 30th of March 1941. On the way through they stayed for a while in Bucarest where my father was posted as Minister. After King Boris' death the Queen, with her sister Mafalda and Queen Elena of Italy, made a plea to B. Filoff asking for their return to Court or at least as guests, but permission was denied, to her great disappointment.

They remained in Hungary until they were repatriated with the Bulgarian colony, by the Russians.

I believe that all this was the fruit of intrigues created by Mrs. Filoff, who instigated her husband to prove himself politically loyal to the Germans. She asserted that they were not good Bulgarian citizens. There is no doubt that Hélène and Marie were very much anglophiles, but that belonged to their culture.

* Quoted in Sir George Rendel's book *The sword and the Olive*. He was at the time British minister in Bulgaria (1938-1941).

They lived in Budapest in the hotel *Ritz*, they were spied upon and often found that their rooms had been searched.

They remained in Budapest until serious bombardments started, when they evacuated to the Lake Balaton with the rest of the Bulgarian colony (1945). All around them the Russian troops were fighting, small towns were taken and lost again and then – one day – they, the Russians! were there.

A young uncouth soldier irrupted into the house where the Bulgarians had been assembled, shouting: *We have fought. We have beaten them. We are on our way to Berlin.*

Then arrived the regular troops followed by carts pulled by small horses, some coming from far away Siberia, a frightening vision. Pillage was permitted for three days, the troops had not to be told twice. Some days later the Bulgarians were told that the departure was for the next morning. They gathered their few belongings by candle light, in the morning they were bundled into a truck and for many hours were shaken and bounced about until they arrived to Budapest. An apocalyptic vision! The town hardly existed, all the bridges destroyed, except for one wooden bridge guarded by Russian sentinels.

The next morning departure for Bucarest, they arrived after three days traveling in a train with no window panes, practically no food and exhausted. Some friends nourished and comforted them. Then a new departure, traveling for five days by train, parked in an unheated wagon with no possibility of lying down, watched by officers and Russian soldiers, nothing to eat except for some dry bread and lard, their guardians did not fare better.

They arrived in Sofia, dirty exhausted, not knowing where to go as they had lost everything in the bombardments, hardly any money. Luckily, in some way it had been announced that the Bulgarian colony and the staff of the Legation were expected. To their great relief their cousin Velika Nikiforoff was there to meet them. Slowly they got organized, a friend of Marie lend her an attic which she decorated with her paintings in her free time. She gave English lessons and had quite a lot of pupils. Depending on the rumors circulating their mood passed from optimism to desperation, it was dangerous to see foreigners but still they tried to get information and words of encouragement amongst other from Mr. Barnes, the U.S. political counselor. Meanwhile the Queen had asked Hélène to resume her position, she did not refuse, so she returned to Vrana where all the Royal Family lived in great uncertainty regarding their future.

In September 1946 the referendum was held, but the issue had been decided before hand: the monarchy was abolished.

Very soon after that, the Queen, her children and Princess Eudoxie had to leave the country. Her Majesty very kindly included not only Hélène but also Marie in her suite. Up to the last moment the latter did not know if they would let her leave the country. They had to leave within three days without taking anything except their personal belongings: this was no problem as they had already lost everything in the bombardments.

Young King Simeon gave a pen-knife to my Aunt Marie asking her to protect him, this shows in what kind of atmosphere they were living. They were supposed to go via Istanbul to Egypt. There were persisting rumors that their destination might be Russia and when the train stopped before the border they had a moment of apprehension, but after a short stop they crossed the frontier.

Free, but abandoning everything they were attached to: family, friends, their country, their roots and part of themselves.

A second exile started for them, with a very uncertain future.

They arrived safely in Alexandria, Egypt. King Farouk very generously had given hospitality to all the Royal families in exile and their suite. The Queen rented a small villa until 1950 for her family and suite, Princess Marie Louise and King Simeon attending school. On the whole a few pleasant years passed until future plans were made: the Queen and her family went to the south of France, for vacations where her mother Queen Elena of Italy resided. My aunts went with them.

Later Queen Giovanna settled in Madrid until the marriage of King Simeon (1960), then moved to Estoril (Portugal) where she bought a villa, which she named *Villa Yantra*.

Hélène remained with her and died peacefully in 1965. She is buried in Estoril.

I remember that Hélène, being the eldest sister, had always felt protective towards her family and had worried very much for their future, as the Cold war did not make the world a very safe place for displaced persons and there were no definite means of subsistence. She was liked and respected, as she was gentle, tactful, discreet and very polite. She tried making business contacts for my father in Argentine, but unsuccessfully as he was not cut out for this type of work.

Meanwhile, Marie who was of a more independent character and not so easily discouraged by the difficulties of life, chose Rome to start with. She knew a lot of people and found a lot of odd jobs such as tourist guide, little parts in movies, (Rome was the center of movie industry at the time), painting decorative panels which she sold and so earned her living.

She had found a room in a small pensione where many of the occupants later became famous as designers, writers, journalists. It was a very interesting and amusing atmosphere. As she had a very definite sense of humour and was ironic in her judgments, always ready to laugh, it made her life easier: she never complained, on the contrary made fun of the difficulties. Like all foreigners, she had to have a permesso di soggiorno, which had to be renewed every 6 months. So, on one of the interviews she had with the Questore he said: *Dear Miss Petroff, I don't really mind what date of birth you choose, as long as you stick to the same one for each application.*

In those years (1950-1956) the family was dispersed: my aunts lived respectively in Madrid and Paris, my parents in Argentina, where they stayed till 1956.

By 1956 my family had returned to Europe and lived in Brussels. My aunts Hélène and Marie often came to spend the holidays with us.

Marie had moved from Rome to Paris in 1956 to be nearer to her friends and relatives. Also her great friend and cousin Mika Panizza had managed to leave Bulgaria in 1949 and established herself with her family in Paris. The small apartment of the Panitzas had become a gathering point for all the Bulgarian friends, cousins and friends from before. It was their warmth and hospitality that attracted everybody. I used to go to Paris for my work and visit my aunt and we used to spend a lot of time there. In spite of all the difficulties and sad news from our country there was always a lighthearted atmosphere. Nobody ever complained.

Marie and Mika were always interested in other people. Marie managed to earn her living by decorating trays and cache-pots which were sold to the leading decorators such as Jansen.

As she was an entertaining person, people appreciated her wit and she was very much invited. Young people loved her. She lived in a minuscule apartment, made her own vodka and had many visitors of all ages. The years went by and it became more difficult for her to move around in buses or metro. She had been attacked in her flat by two thugs who threatened to cut her throat if she didn't show them where her jewels were. She did not give in, but all the same they found most of them and, to top it all, they pushed her onto the bed and hit her on the back of the neck, which was not the best treatment for an elderly lady. As a result her head remained bent forward and she had difficulty straightening. *This inconvenience – she said – has changed my horizon: I now mostly see other people's shoes.*

After that, she did not go out very much and probably was lonely, but again she kept her spirits.

By 1971 she was the only survivor of that generation of my family. I lived in Rome where she came a few times to stay with me: she was the last link with my past. I often went to Paris and we still had wonderful moments together. When she fell ill in July 1975, her mind was not always clear, but in her moments of lucidity she remembered her hallucinations and was greatly amused by them.

The end came in October 1975. She was buried in the Russian cemetery in Paris, next to a Russian ballet dancer (which, I am sure, would have amused her very much).

Laughter in life is essential, but there is less and less of it, and more and more exiles and displaced persons with little hope of being integrated into dignified lives.

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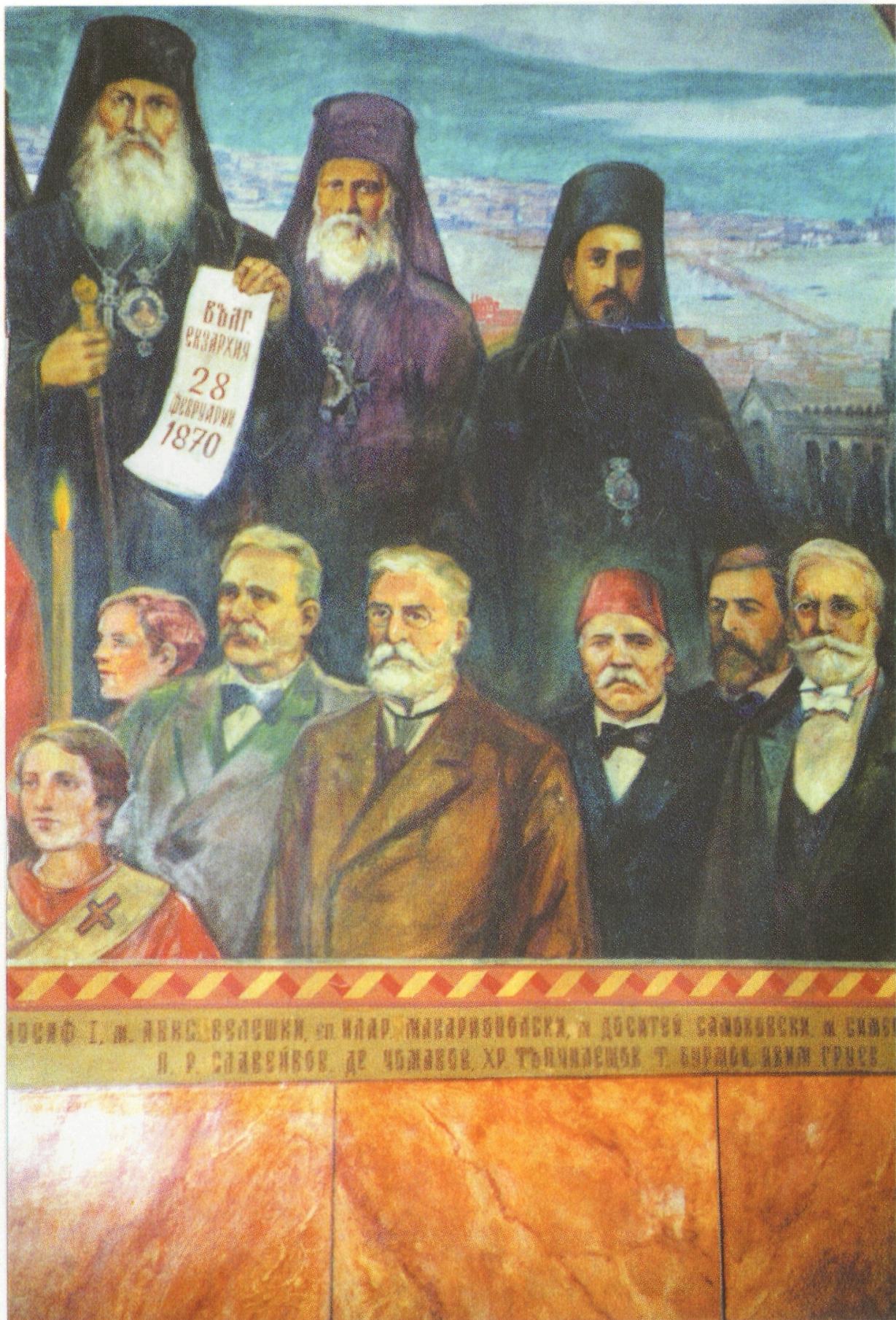
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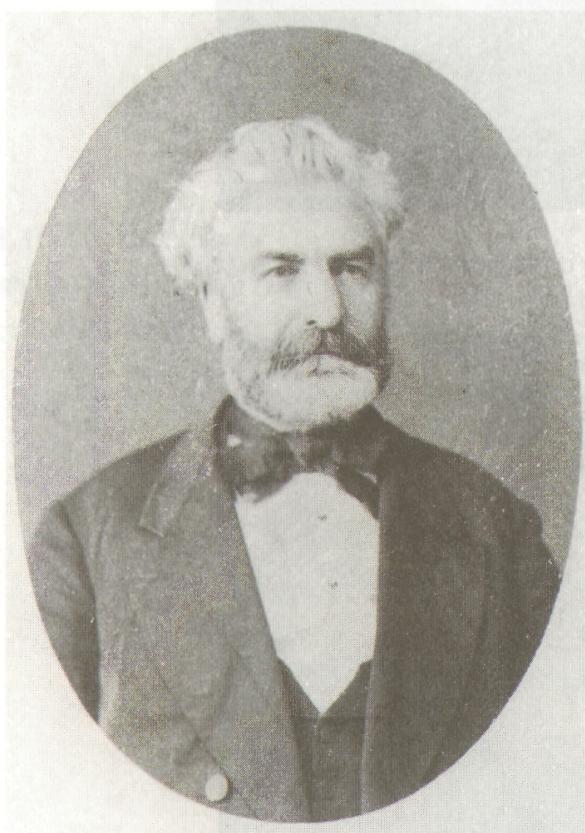


НАРОДНЫЙ СОБОРЪ. ЦАРИГРАДЪ 1871 Г. ЮНИЙ.

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9. Щърковно-народният събор, Цариград, юни 1871.

Д-р Чомаков (петият от дясно наляво във втората редица) е между двама от своите противници – д-р Стамболски и х. Николи Минчоглу



10. Д-р Стоян Чомаков

Цариград, 70-те години на 19 век



11. Елена Ст. Чомакова

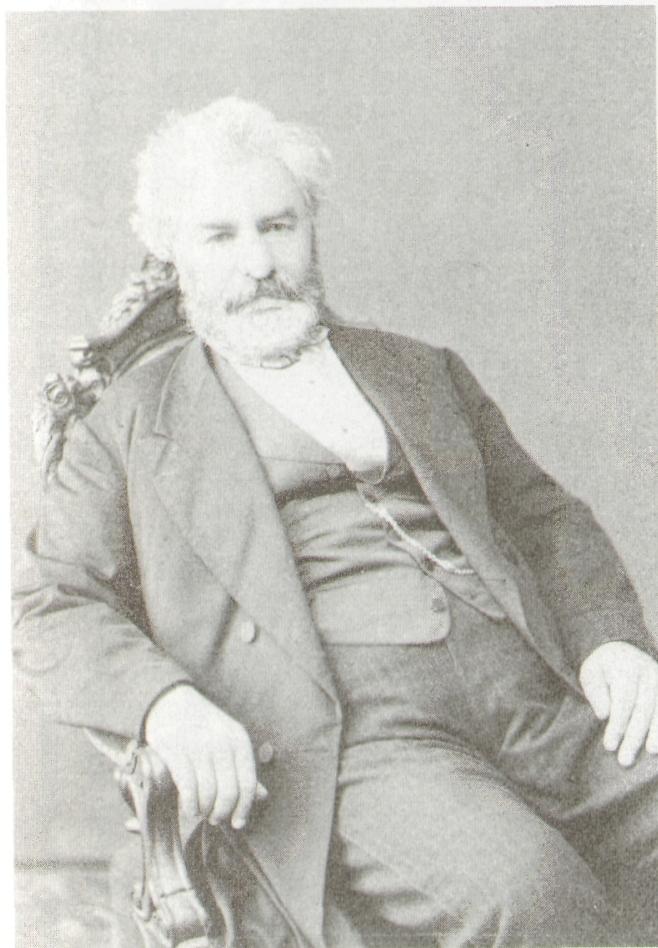
Цариград, преди 1878



12. Мария Ст. Чомакова
Цариград, преди 1878



13. Мария Ст. Петрова-Чомакова, София



14. Д-р Стоян Чомаков
80-те години на 19 век



15. Д-р Чомаков, от дясната страна на д-р К. Стоилов, като просветен министър от правителството на последния при посрещането на княз Фердинанд във Видин, юни 1887



**46. Пълномощен министър
Димитър Станчов и съветник
Стоян Петров-Чомаков, Лондон, 1925**



**47. Стоян Петров-Чомаков
Лондон, 1927**



DIPLOMAT'S WEDDING.—Mr. S. Petroff Tchomakoff, Councillor of the Bulgarian Legation in London, and Miss Lily de Poorter, after their wedding at the St. George's Church, S.W., yesterday.—(Daily Sketch.)

**48. Вестникарска снимка от сватбата на Стоян Петров-Чомаков и
Лили де Поортър, Лондон, 1928**



49. Едуърд де Поортер, тъст на Стоян Петров-Чомаков



TATZ LÁSZLÓ: STOYAN PETROFF TCHOMAKOFF BOLGÁR KÖVET

50. Стоян Петров-Чомаков, управляващ българското посолство в Будапеща, 1930



51. Сватбеният прием на Стоян Петров-Чомаков и Лили де Поортер в бащината къща на младоженката, Амълсайд, Уимълдън, 1928



65. Стоян Петров-Чомаков с колеги от Външно министерство
(Илия Белинов, Никола Балабанов, Константин Сарафов)

Новият български пълн. министър въ Стокхолмъ даден е агримън за г. Петровъ Чомаковъ



Швейцарското правителство е дало агримън за назначаващего на г. Петровъ-Чомаковъ, директор на политическото отделение при Министерството на външните работи, за български пълномощен министър въ Стокхолмъ.

Животописни бележки за новия министър

Назначът пълномощен министър въ Стокхолмъ е отъ малцината пълномощни министри, преминали през всички степени на кариерата.

Той постъпва кандидатът атъше през 1910 г. Взима участие въ балканската и общоевропейските воини. Служил е въ шифър на войската въ отдѣл за съръзъ съ съглашенски войски. Но-сителъ е на орден за храбръстъ. При преговорите за миръ е билъ секретаръ на българската делегация.

През 1921 г. е назначенъ първи секретаръ въ легациите въ Лондонъ, а следъ това съветникъ. Въ същото време изпълнява службата агентъ въ англо-българския арбитражънъ съдъ. През 1929 г. е управляващъ легацията въ Будапеща, която постъ заема до 1933 г., когато е назначенъ управ-ващъ легацията въ Вашингтонъ.

През 1935 г. е повишенъ за пълномощен министър и приведенъ на ра-бота въ министерството, където заема поста политически директоръ.



67. Пълномощен министър Стоян Петров-Чомаков на път към кралския дворец за връчване на акредитивните си писма, Стокхолм, 1938

66. Стоян Петров-Чомаков, новоназначен за български пълномощен министър в Стокхолм, 1938



72. Стоян Петров-Чомаков,
пълномощен министър в Букурещ
1940



October 26th 1948
 To our darling in
 memory of the last moments
 in Geneva! Floro
 with her best regards from
 our darling son

73. Лили Петрова-Чомакова с двете
си сестри Вайтлит (Флоро) и
Айрис, Женева, 1948



74. Елена Вл. Петрова-Чомакова в свитата на българското царско
семейство на прием, даден от египетския крал Фарук, Александрия, 1946

Нине става, казва в. Народност, няколко години г-н Чомаков как залъгва българский народ с Черковен въпрос, от който, според казванието му, щат произлязат всичките добрини за народа стига само да ся реши тойзи въпрос... Гръците изпъдиха царя си Отона, че не завардил народните им правдини, а ний зачто да не изтласкаме един народен изедник, който ни залъгва нине седем години и става инструмент да пленят турците по-лесно Пловдивската област...

Отон и Чомаков – какво остроумно сравнение...

Зарязванието или напушчанието на Черковният въпрос не сматрями ний освен като съвършено вече погребвание на мрътвият народен дух, който едва ли не в това отношение само е показал бележец на живот. Изгонванието на г-н Чомакова не препоръчвами на цареградските българи ний никога. Не защото го прогласявами непогрешим или защото споделями донейде мислите му и одобрявами напълно поведението му. Но защото сми узнали на опит и видим и днес, че ако и него изгонят или ако и той сам ся оттегли, то не остава ни един-единичък, който да помене поне името на българите и да нанесе на умът на правителствените мъже, че има българский народ и че този народ е онеправдан и чака удовлетворение...

*Петко СЛАВЕЙКОВ,
6. Македония, 2, 9 gek. 1867*

Знаете ли що е Българският въпрос?... Мъките бяха големи, защото имахме да се борим против фермани и берати, против патрици, против гръцкия народен елемент, против европейската политика. Нарекоха ни предатели, еретици, противоправителствени. Ние не чухме. Българският народ постоянствуваше. Но трябваше деятели. Тия се намериха, да са здрави! От тях първият е бил г-н Чомаков, без когото надали можеше да се свърши работата...

*Гаврил КРЪСТЕВИЧ,
Църковно-народен събор, 1871*

Д-р Чомаков е един от тия, които като работиха за Българския черковен въпрос, приготвиха освобождението на България. Той е единичкият от българските дейци, който не се е лутал ни при турци, ни при руси, ни при англичани, ни при други някои, а е водил чисто българска народна партия...

*Стефан СТАМБОЛОВ,
Народно събрание, 1887*